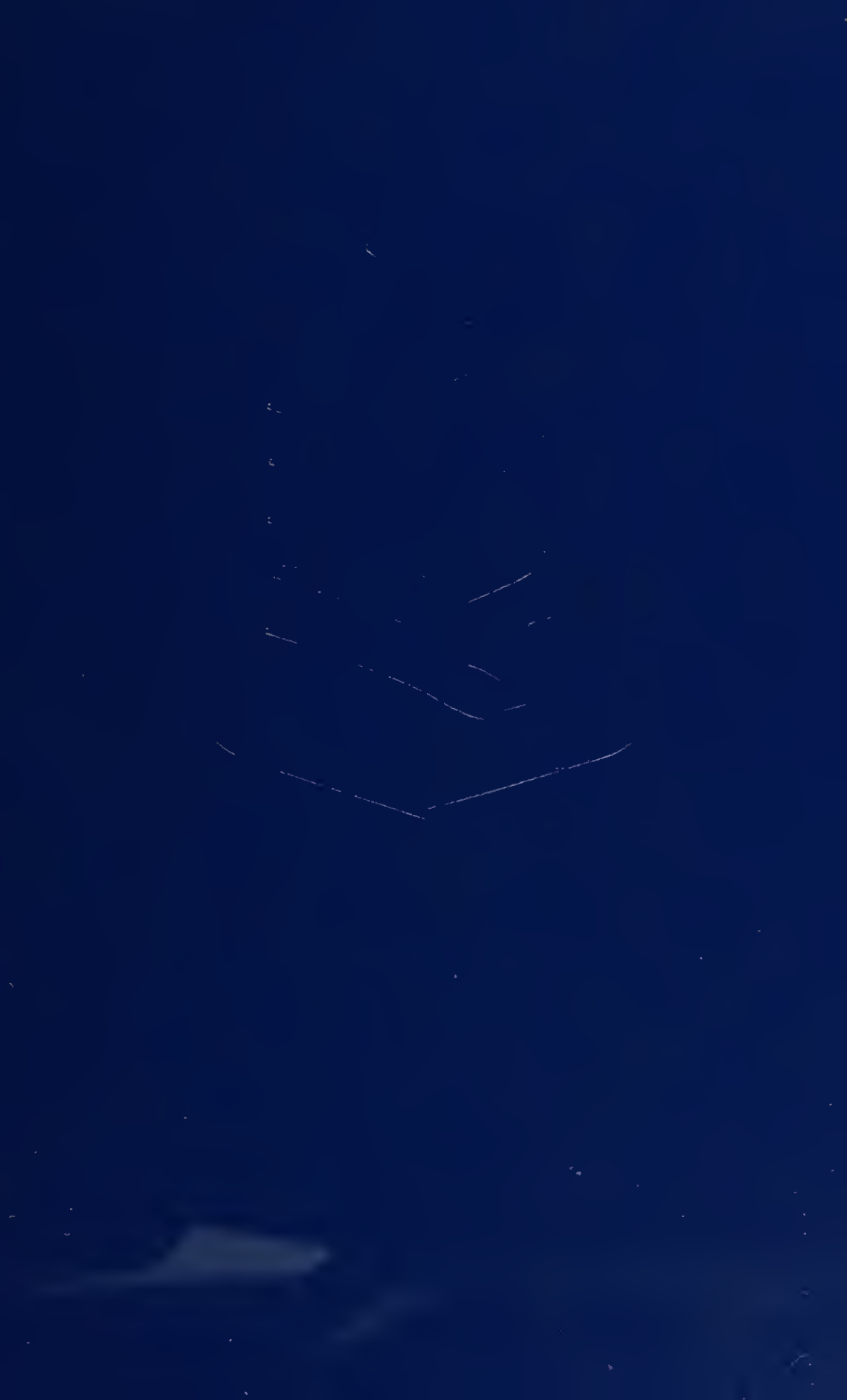

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STURLUNGA SAGA

Volume II

STURLUNGA SAGA

Translated by Julia H. McGrew

VOLUME I

The Saga of Hvamm-Sturla

and

The Saga of the Icelanders

Translated by Julia H. McGrew with an Introduction by R. George Thomas

VOLUME II

Shorter Sagas of the Icelanders

Translated by Julia H. McGrew and R. George Thomas

STURLUNGA SAGA

VOLUME II

SHORTER SAGAS OF THE ICELANDERS

TRANSLATED FROM THE OLD ICELANDIC BY
JULIA H. McGREW AND
R. GEORGE THOMAS

TWAYNE PUBLISHERS, INC., NEW YORK
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Introduction

Introduction

In his Introduction to Volume I of these translations, Professor Thomas has given so masterly a summary of the problems of authorship, composition, and chronology in the *Sturlunga saga,* and so penetrating an analysis of the age of the Sturlungs, that it would be gratuitous for me to try to extend his suggestions and observations by merely citing further evidence from the sagas translated in this volume. It will be of more help to readers to indicate here the wide range of Icelandic studies which the whole of the *Sturlunga* compilation elicits—studies of historical methods and criteria, of the relations between history and fiction in medieval Icelandic literature, and of style and structure in all the Icelandic sagas. Earlier investigations of authorship and sources, though often criticized for their insistence on a polarized conflict between oral and written transmission,[1] have made possible the more recent examinations of Icelandic history and fiction, and the *Sturlunga* offers a vast body of evidence essential to such examinations.

Ólafia Einarsdóttir has published a careful survey of the chronological methods adopted by Sturla Þórðarson in his *Íslendinga saga (The Saga of the Icelanders)*[2] and points out that the only sagas from thirteenth-century Iceland, other than Sturla's *Íslendinga,* in which we find a "time scale in the learned sense" are *The Saga of Guðmund Arason the Priest* and Sturla's biographies of two Norwegian kings, Hákon the Old and Magnús the Lawmender. She concludes that this is "yet another example of the fusion in Iceland of learning from abroad with domestic popular traditions,"[3] and thus reminds us of Professor Turville-Petre's and Einar Ólafur Sveinsson's careful surveys of Icelandic scholarship in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and their portraits

of the schools of learning at Oddi and Þingeyr.[4] Remembering the familiar European development from annals to chronicles to the writing of history,[5] we need to find out why the development of historical writing in Iceland was, if not the reverse of this process,[6] at any rate a development far more completely interwoven with the development of fictional writing.

Furthermore, the study of those events and characters in some of the fictional sagas which are closely analogous to events and characters in the *Sturlunga*,[7] has led not only to significant and complicated questions about the attitudes and intentions of many Icelandic authors[8] who used different narrative modes and styles, but has also focused our attention anew on the relationship of history to fiction in medieval Icelandic literature as a whole.[9] We have long rejected the naive belief that the mere appearance, the quantity of genealogical and geographical detail, assures us of the historical veracity of a saga;[10] and we have by now rejected the equally oversimplified view that the writing of history traveled one road, parallel to but never bisecting that of fiction. The recognition of the varying relations and influences between the two, particularly when one writer, such as Snorri or Sturla, wrote both sorts of narrative, has resulted in more exacting and illuminating analyses of style than heretofore. Qualifying but not entirely discrediting the earlier idea of the "objectivity" of the sagas, Otto Springer, Paul Schach, and others have begun the painstaking and substantial examinations Springer called for in 1939 in his essay about "style" in the sagas.[11] But much remains to be done, and the *Sturlunga* offers an exhilarating variety of style and tone, mixtures of learned with popular, of satiric with pious, and of "objective" with romantic modes.

The *Íslendinga* itself raises questions about Sturla as a historian—was he as great a historian as his uncle Snorri? Did he even intend to write the same sort of history? Finnur Jónsson was among the first of those who found Sturla's history wanting in the interpretive clarity and narrative vitality of Snorri's *Heimskringla*.[12] Though Finnur Jónsson praised Sturla for his complete "impartiality"[13] and his refusal to betray bitterness, blame, or hostility in his account of events in which he himself

played a prominent and often unhappy part, Finnur nevertheless concluded that Sturla's clear, even unruffled style failed to distinguish the important from the unimportant.[14] But in these shorter sagas which accompany Sturla's *Íslendinga* in the *Sturlunga* compilation, we have a chance to compare Sturla as a historian with others of his own and the immediately following generation. We now know how often Snorri's interpretation of events and character in his history of the Norwegian kings informed his presentation of those events and persons;[15] but we are just beginning to discover how much of Sturla's apparent refusal to intrude personal comment may be offset by his use of strophes and dreams to reveal his personal ideals, his criticism of his age, and his sense of the inner life of Iceland beneath the violence and cruelty of the thirteenth century.[16]

Though the *Íslendinga* is the heart of the *Sturlunga,* these shorter sagas of the Icelanders have their own historical and artistic value. *The Saga of Þorgils skarði* is informed by an entirely different tone (Vigfusson called it "romantic"[17]) from that of *Íslendinga:* throughout, the author (who was, the most recent editor of the *Sturlunga* believes, a certain Þórð Hítnesing[18]) is concerned to portray a hero, to give a sense of heroism, of the continuing possibility of honor as a central motivation in Iceland, even after the assassination of Snorri Sturluson. Þorgils takes revenge on the Burners of Flugumýr after they have also slain Odd Þórarinsson, one of Gizur's followers; this brings about Þorgils' death, in a tragically ironic chain of events, for Þorgils was ultimately treacherously destroyed by the very man, Odd's brother Þorvarð, who had first persuaded Þorgils to take up the case to avenge Odd. This pattern of feud and vengeance reflects the same heroic concept of honor and the realization of its eventual destructiveness which prevails in the fictional sagas.

Again, in *The Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði,* the author concentrates on the *idea* of mediation rather than on the actual deeds of the characters;[19] he thus echoes the central themes of *Njáls saga,* and similarly focuses the reader's attention on the use of dialogue to reveal the essential behind the surface motivation. The author of *The Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði* transforms legal

technicalities and moral debates into dramatic narrative of an imaginative power like that of the classical family sagas. *The Saga of Guðmund Arason the Priest* offers a vigorous combination of hagiographical and historical themes and devices: prophecies, marvels, cures, dreams, and ecclesiastical rhetoric all combine to give a different portrait of Bishop Guðmund from that in *Íslendinga,* and reveal yet again the range and skill of narrative style in the works of thirteenth-century Icelandic writers. *The Saga of Þórð kakali,* in some ways the short saga most reminiscent of Sturla's *Íslendinga,* because of its mounting detail and sharp sense of place and personality, nevertheless reveals a far more disillusioned attitude toward the internecine slaughter and the debasement of honorable motives, and the author makes quite clear that Þórð's triumph, if so it can be called, is bought only at the price of his noblest adversary's death. The lament for Brand Kolbeinsson goes beyond Sturla's sense of pathos, and is fully tragic.

As we explore the differing historical methods and narrative forms of the sagas in the *Sturlunga,* we will not go far wrong if we keep in mind the careful and affectionate distinctions Vigfusson long ago offered when commenting on Ari, Snorri, and Sturla. For though he thought that Sturla was by far "the most unequal of all the great Icelandic writers," and recognized that "Ari was an historian at heart; Sturla was in soul a teller of stories, by accident an historian,"[20] he also saw that each author had his individual merits: ". . . it might be said that Ari was the most venerable, the most truthful, and the one we could least afford to have lost; that Snorri excelled in humour, in eloquence, and in an epic richness of style; while we should pronounce Sturla to be the most pathetic, the most natural, and the most human."[21]

Sturla's humanity is most fittingly recognized by the stature of the histories which accompany his *Íslendinga* in the *Sturlunga* compilation.

Julia H. McGrew

Vassar College

Sturlunga Saga

VOLUME II

Shorter Sagas of the Icelanders

The Tale of Geirmund heljarskin

The Tale of Geirmund heljarskin

1

Geirmund heljarskin was the son of King Hjör Hálfsson, after whom Hálf's Champions were named; Hjör was the son of King Hjörleif. A second son of King Hjör was Hámund who was also called heljarskin. They were twins.

This is the story of why they were called heljarskin. One time when King Hjör had left to attend an assembly of kings, the queen was pregnant and, while the king was away from the country, gave birth to two boys. They were both extraordinarily big and both hideously ugly in appearance. But the worst thing about their ugliness was that no one thought he had ever seen darker skin than these two boys had. The queen paid little attention to the boys for they did not seem to her very lovable.

Loðhött was the name of a thrall who was overseer of the other thralls. He himself was married and his wife gave birth to a son at the same time that the queen gave birth. This boy whom the thrall's wife bore was so extraordinarily handsome that the queen thought she had never seen such a child, and this boy seemed to her far more attractive than her own sons. The queen then decided to exchange boys with the thrall-wife. The thrall-wife thought as did the queen that hers was a more princely son, but she dared not refuse to exchange boys with the queen. So the queen now took the son of the thrall-wife into her home and had him given the name of Leif. And the queen gave out that this was her own son. The thrall-wife took on the queen's sons, who grew up on the straw-covered floors like other thralls' children, until they were three years old. Leif, however, lived

in ease and received the attention one would expect a royal child to have.

But as the lads grew up together Leif began to be diffident, whereas Hámund and Geirmund gained in vigor the older they grew; thus each took after his own family.

2

Men say that once the skáld Bragi[1] came to one of King Hjör's banquets and then stayed for some time with the king. They say that one day the king went hunting with his retinue of housecarles and there were few men at home at the royal hall. Bragi the skáld was there; he was sitting on the raised dais, playing with a cane he held, his cloak drawn up over his head. The queen was lying in a wall-bed near the outer wall of the hall, so covered up with bedclothes that one could not know she was there unless one had already seen her. Leif was sitting on the high-seat, playing with a gold ring; Hámund and Geirmund were sitting in the straw on the floor, watching Leif play with the ring. They did not notice that anyone was in the hall. Geirmund said to his brother,

"Shall we go over to Leif now and take away his gold ring—and play with it ourselves for a while?"

"I'm willing," replied Hámund.

The boys then ran up to the high-seat and took the ring away from Leif, whose face fell and who cried out after them.

The boys said, "Just listen to the way this king's son takes to weeping for a gold ring. It's true then that things will not go well for the people you rule."

The boys now grabbed Leif, pulled him down from the high-seat and laughed at him. Bragi the skáld then stood up and went over to where the queen was lying in her bed, leaned on his reed-staff and recited this verse:[2]

Two are here—
I trust both well—
Hámund and Geirmund,
Sons of Hjör,

A third one, Leif,
The son of Loðhött—
Not your son, queen—
Nor so able, I see.

The queen stood up, went away with the boys and a second time made an exchange with the thrall-wife. It seemed to the queen now—as was indeed the case—that they had become more promising, as was likely they should considering their high birth.

In the evening when the king came home and was sitting in the high-seat, the queen went to stand before him, the boys at either hand, and told the king everything that had happened and how she had made the exchanges with the thrall's wife; she begged him not to be angry with her. The king looked at the boys and then said: "Certainly I believe these boys are my sons but still, I have never seen such Hel's complexions as these lads show."

And hereafter the boys were called heljarskin.[3]

As soon as they were grown to manhood they went abroad on harrying expeditions, soon won for themselves both riches and renown and for a long time commanded a large fleet of ships—according to accounts in some sources, not least in the last part of the saga of Hrók svarti,[4] where the brothers were known as the mightiest warriors among the sea-kings of those days.

3

One summer when they led viking raids in the west,[5] they took far more booty than other summers, according to reports. Before they came home they arranged during that summer to exchange spoils: to one fell twenty pounds of silver and to the other two pounds of gold. And at the end of this summer they gave up raiding and sent all their men off with substantial payments.[6]

The brothers then sailed together in their two ships to the kingdom of Norway. Harald hárfagri was then ruling Norway; the brothers intended to find refuge there[7] and they disbanded their fleet and company. But when the king heard about this

he did not like their staying there, and thought it not unlikely that they were thinking of raising forces against him. Some people say that Geirmund went away to Iceland because of King Harald's tyranny. But I have heard it said that at the time those two brothers returned from their viking raids in the west most men considered no journey a greater source of fame than the voyage to Iceland. And for this very reason Geirmund meant to sail to Iceland straightway after his arrival that summer in Norway, for the season was already well advanced. But Hámund did not want to go; he went to join Helgi magri,[8] and they went out to Iceland together.

4

Geirmund, however, went immediately to Iceland; his ship came in to Breiðafjörð and he spent the first winter he was in Iceland in Búðardal. In the spring he laid claim to land from Búðardalsá to Fábeinsá and built his homestead at a place still named Geirmundarstaðir.

Geirmund bóndi[9] kept a splendid establishment and had never less than eighty fighting men at this homestead in Geirmundarstaðir. He owned four other farmsteads also: one was at Áðalvík in Ísafjörð and a second at Kjaransvík, where Kjaran, a thrall of Geirmund's, was in charge with twelve thralls under him. Geirmund owned a third farm at Almenningarvestri, in Hornstrandir. His thrall Björn managed that farmstead; Björn was later outlawed for sheep-stealing and his confiscated possessions became common property. Geirmund's fourth farmstead was managed by his thrall Atli who like Kjaran, had twelve thralls under him. And these farmsteads contributed everything for the homestead of which Geirmund himself was the head at Geirmundarstaðir.

5

Geir was the name of a powerful and splendid man in Sogn. He worshiped heathen gods and was therefore known as Végeir.[10] He had seven or more children: his sons were Vébjörn, Vémund, Véstein, Véleif and Véþorn; his daughter was named Védís.

When Végeir died Vébjörn inherited both his property and his reputation. He protected the enemies of Hákon Grjótgardsson[11] and therefore all his family of brothers and sisters set out for Iceland. They were tossed about for a long time at sea during the summer but by autumn they landed at Hlöðuvík west of Horn. Vébjörn then prepared to offer sacrifices but his brothers urged him to move on and so he offered no sacrifice then. They put out to sea again the same day and brought their ships to land in very bad weather at a place now called Sygnakleif. Geirmund heljarskin's thrall Atli then took in all the ships' companies for the winter. Atli was a man hard to get on with and a great shape-changer. When Geirmund learned that his thrall had given this assistance, he asked him, "What came over you that you should take Vébjörn and his companions under your wing?"

The thrall replied, "It came over me that I wanted in this way to discover how noble and magnanimous that man could be whose thrall might dare undertake to give such assistance."

Geirmund thanked his thrall for deciding on this assistance and for this reason gave him his freedom as well as land for farming. To many men Geirmund gave wide possessions both in land and in movable goods. To Hrólf Kjallaksson he gave the farmstead at Ballará. Hrólf was a friend of Geirmund and from him came a long line of men: his sons were Illugi rauð and Sölvi who was the father of Þórð, the father of Magnús, the father of Sölvi who was the father of the priest Pál.

6

Geirmund lived at Geirmundarstaðir until his old age. On Geirmund's land there was a grassy slope which he said he could do without if he had his way, mostly because, "There's one place on that slope where, whenever I look at it, the light so blazes into my eyes that I become very uneasy. And the light is always just above the rowan-tree which grows by itself under the lip of the slope."

Consequently, if ever any of his milch-cows pastured on that slope he let their milk go unused for that day. One time, men

say, his milch-cows had gone down there during the night. When his shepherd rose and saw the cattle on the slope he was terribly frightened; he ran as fast as he could, drove them off the slope and tore off a branch of the rowan-tree to drive them in—thus he brought them all home to Geirmundarstaðir. But Geirmund had left his bed early that morning; he saw the shepherd driving the cattle down from the slope and was not easy in his mind to see that the cattle had been up there. He went forward to meet the shepherd and at once noticed that he had in his hand a rowan-tree branch with which he was driving the cattle. At once each of them became so enraged that Geirmund rushed at the shepherd and thrashed him vigorously, ordering him never again to drive his cattle with a branch that grew on that slope, least of all one from the rowan-tree. Geirmund could easily recognize the branch because only that single rowan-tree grew on his property—in that very place where the church at Skarð now stands, according to what we have heard reliable men report. Geirmund had the branch taken away and burned in the fire but he had his milch-cows driven into the pasture and their milk left unused for that day.

7

Geirmund's daughter was Ýr, the mother of Þórhall and Oddi, father of Hallvör who married Börk the son of Þormóð Þjóstarsson. Steinólf lági, the son of the hersir Hrólf from Agðir, settled the land between Búðardalsá and Tjaldanes and lived in Fagrdal. His daughter was Helga, the mother of Hyrning Óláfsson who married Arndís the daughter of Geirmund heljarskin. Their daughter was Friðgerð, the mother of Snærir Þóroddsson, father of Oddi, the father of Þorgils Oddason. A second daughter of Steinólf lági from Fagrdal was Arndís, the mother of Þórð, the father of Þorgerð who was the mother of Hrafn, father of Snört, father of Jódís, the mother of Halla, the mother of Yngvild who married Snorri the Lawspeaker, the father of Narfi, Skarð-Snorri's father.

Ingólf Arnarson was the first settler to take up land in Iceland from whom men could trace their lineage; Ingólf was the father of Þorstein, the father of Þorkel máni the Lawspeaker. Þorhild

was the daughter of Þorstein Ingólfsson, the mother of Þorkel, the father of Ketil who was the father of Hauk, father of Yngvild who was the mother of Snorri, the father of Narfi, Skarð-Snorri's father.

There was a man named Hrollaug who was the son of Jarl Rögnvald of Mærr. From him were descended the men of Síða. His sons were Özur the father of Þórdís who was the mother of Hall of Síða. Egil Hallsson was the father of Þorgerð who was the mother of Bishop Jón.[12] Yngvild Hall's daughter was the mother of Þórey, the mother of Sæmund fróði. Þorvarð Hallsson was the father of Þórdís who was the mother of Jóreið, the mother of Hall Teitsson, the priest in Haukadal. Hall's son Þorstein was the father of Magnús, the father of Einar who was the father of Bishop Magnús.[13] Ljót Hallsson was the father of Guðrún, the mother of Einar Arason and of Steinun, the mother of Guðmund and of Hallbera, the mother of Þorgils; this was a line which led to Húnbogi, the father of Snorri who was the father of Narfi, Skarð-Snorri's father. The mother of Skarð-Snorri was Guðrún, the daughter of Þórð Oddleifsson who was the son of Þórð krákunef. These were Skarð-Snorri's brothers and sisters: Þórð who married Jóreið Hall's daughter (their daughter was Helga whom Sturla Þórðarson the Lawman married); Þorbjörn and Halldís who were illegitimate. Yngvild Snorri's sister married Gunnstein Hallsson; she was the mother of Vigfús and his brothers and sisters. Guðríð, another sister of Snorri, was the mother of Guðmund Óláfsson the priest and his brothers and sisters. Hallgerð, a sister of Snorri, married Þórð from below Fell. She was the mother of Snorri, Guðmund, and Yngvild who was the mother of Þétur Snorrason in Skógarnes.

Björn, the son of Ketil flatnef, was the father of Kjallak, the father of Þorgrím, father of Vermund, father of Yngvild, the mother of Þorgerð who was the mother of Yngvild who was the mother of Snorri, the son of Húnbogi Þorgilsson.

Dálk was the brother of Þorgils Hafliði's son; he was the father of Bersi the father of Dálk who was the father of the priest Halldór in Saurbær. Halldór was the father of Þorstein who married Ingigerði, the daughter of Filippus Sæmundarson. Their daugh-

ter was Guðrún who was first married to Benedikt but later married to the Reverend Kolbein Auðkýling. The abbess Hallbera was another daughter of Þorstein bóndi and of Ingigerði.

The Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði

The Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði

1

There was a man named Hafliði, the son of Má Húnröðarson who was a grandson of Véfröð Ævarsson; Hafliði's wife was Þuríð, the daughter of Þórð, son of Sturla Þjóðreksson; they had several children. He later married Rannveig, the sister of Hall Teitsson; their daughter was Sigríð who married Þórð of Vatnsfjörð; Snorri was the name of their son. Hafliði lived at Breiðabólsstaðir in Vestrhóp and was both a wise man and benevolent and a great chieftain.

Bergþór was Hafliði Másson's brother; he was married to Kolþerna, the daughter of Eyjólf halt, and their son was Guðmund, the father of Má the priest. Má was another son of Bergþór. He was unpopular and ill-natured, unlike his worthy relatives; he had some money but had trouble holding on to it. He often stayed with his kinsman Hafliði in the winter and was troublesome for Hafliði.

One spring people told how Má bought a ship for himself and sailed north to Strandir. He was a large, big-boned man, angular in shape, dark and ugly. He came in to Ávík in Strandir, to the bóndi[1] named Hneitir, who was a worthy and a popular man. His wife was Björg; they had two sons, Steinþór and Finnbogi, while Rannveig and Hergerð were their daughters. Hneitir was a Þingman[2] of Hafliði and looked after his shore-drift.[3]

There was a man named Þorstein, a popular man, calm of temper, and considered a most successful fisherman. He supported his mother and his children; he often went out in Hneitir's boat and the latter arranged a fair share for him in return for his work.

2

At that time Þorgils Oddason lived at Staðarhól in Saurbær. He had a large household and in many ways kept it up magnificently. He was a well-to-do man and wealthy. Þorgils was the son of Oddi Snærisson, Þórodd's son. Snæri's mother was Friðgerð, the daughter of Hyrning. Hyrning was married to Arndís, the daughter of Geirmund heljarskin. Oddi Snærisson's mother was Álof, the daughter of Bitru-Odd Þorbjörn's son. Bitru-Odd's mother was Yngvild, the daughter of Álf of the Dales. Yngvild had married Þorvald Steingrímsson eyrgoði, the son of Halldór Þórisson, who settled Steingrímsfjörð and lived at Trollatunga. The lineage of Þorgils Oddason is to some people less well known than that of the men of Reykjanes. Hallbera was his mother's name; she was the daughter of Ari of Reykjanes. Kolfinna was Þorgils' wife; she was the daughter of Hall Styrmisson, son of Þorgeir, from Ásgeirsá. Their part of the country was well-settled with good bóndis in those days. Þorð Gilsson lived below Staðarfel; Hunbógi Þorgilsson lived at Skarð—he was the father of Snorri the Lawspeaker. The priest Má, Þormóð's son, lived at Sælingsdalstunga; he was a close relative of Hafliði Másson. His mother was Halldóra, the daughter of Védís, Má's daughter, and Védís was a sister of Hafliði Másson. Þorstein Kvistsson was married to Védís, the daughter of Þorgerð, herself a daughter of Védís and granddaughter of Má. Guðmund Brandsson the priest lived in Hjarðarholt; he was a near kinsman and loyal friend of Þorgils Oddason. Örnólf Þorgilsson lived at Kvennabrekka. Arnór Kollsson lived at Kleifar in Gilsfjörð. Þórálf Bjarnason lived at Skriðinsenna. He was poor but still he was a friend and Þingman of Hafliði Másson.

3

Ingimund the priest, the son of Einar Arason, was then living on his family estate at Rekyjahólar. He was a popular man though somewhat short of money, and although he was not very well off he was a man of great liberality, as was true of his family. He was a good skáld[4] and in many ways a most worthy man. He too

was a kinsman of Þorgils Oddason; he had given him the Reyknesing-goðorð[5] and there was true comradeship between them. Ingimund was a very well-read man and a good story-teller; he entertained people with poems and composed verses; he himself wrote good poems and was famous thereby in other lands. He was also very hospitable when his friends sent him men in difficulties; he always sent them away well provided for. Hrólf was the name of a man who lived at Skálmarnes below Múli. He was a good friend of Þorgils Oddason and was his Þing-man; he was a notable lawyer, experienced in lawsuits; he was also a historian and wrote fine poetry. He was well-to-do and kept a good house.

There was a man named Þórð who lived in Hvammsdal, which Þorgils Oddason owned. Þórð was a poor man and was known as the Rufeyjaskáld because he had been in the Rufeyjar for a long time. A ship which Bergþór Másson owned was laid up ashore at Dögurðarnes. He gave his son Má as foster son to Þórð then and Má grew up there; but he accepted the good treatment he received with little grace. In the end, Má even did great bodily harm to his foster father Þórð, and then ran at once to his kinsman Hafliði Másson who took him in. But Þorgils conducted the prosecution for this, and there is a long story about this litigation and men's intentions. This is said to be the beginning of the disagreements between Þorgils and Hafliði Másson.

4

There was a man named Óláf Hildisson who was brought up in Breiðafjörð; his father had been sentenced to outlawry but the boy had been brought to the Court of Confiscation,[6] made a charge of the Quarter and a dependent of Breiðafjörð.[7] He lived in this way until he was twelve years old. He was a rather unpromising fellow, somewhat fleshy, with a thick head of hair which fell mostly in waves. Later he lost his position as a dependent and was for a long time with Þorgils at Staðarhól. He had a few possessions: he had some horses; he was not shabby in his clothing and owned a clothes-chest; he also had a very fine axe.

He tried to find out from Þorgils what advice he would give him. Þorgils said that he would be most likely to be a success if he went north to Strandir and there made money for himself; he said that was the custom for many men. So Óláf went north to Strandir with his baggage and came into Ávík to Hneitir. The story goes that at that time Má Bergþórsson raised the question with Þorstein of whether he would join Má's crew.

"You are an easy man to get on with and I badly need such a man."

Þorstein said: "I have been with Hneitir a long time and I have prospered in this situation; it would be awkward for me to make a change."

Má spoke again, saying that he intended to deal fairly with him, and urged Þorstein strongly. So it turned out that Þorstein did not refuse to join Má's crew. Then Má strongly urged Hneitir to let Þorstein leave his boat and join Má's but Hneitir said: "Does he seem to think that his only course is to leave me?"

Má answered, "He talks now as if this seems not unsuitable to him."

Hneitir said that Þorstein should decide—and with that they parted. Óláf Hildisson then raised with Hneitir the question of his working for Hneitir on his boat. Hneitir said that he had chosen men for his crew but added that Má did not yet have a full complement for his ship. Óláf answered, "Judging by what you and I have been saying, that's a man who seems hard for me to approach. I wish you would bring up the question on my behalf."

Hneitir promised to do this and later brought to Má the request that he take on Óláf. Má said that he wanted to talk with the man before he promised him a place in his crew. Later Hneitir arranged a conversation between them and Óláf asked to ship out with Má. Má asked, "Where are your fishing gear and provisions? It is customary for a man to provide himself with such things before he is taken into a crew."

Óláf said he had none of those things. Má said he would not take on a man who had prepared so foolishly for an expedition; he said furthermore that Óláf looked to him like some sort of fool.

Hneitir interceded and told Má he need not hold back from adding Óláf to his crew since he himself would vouch for Óláf. Má said he would not take on Óláf unless he would obey Má's authority in everything and unless Má should determine the amount of his payment. Óláf accepted these conditions and went off to the ship with Má.

Once during the summer Óláf worked clumsily at what he was supposed to be doing, and finally Má became very displeased. There were many other disagreements between them during the summer and eventually Óláf even talked back to Má. Nevertheless they made a good catch and in the autumn returned to Ávík to Hneitir bóndi. Óláf then brought up the question of payment for his services. Má said he was to have nothing—he said he wasn't worth any wages. Óláf said he had often been with well-born men who had treated him much better than had Má, and he added that Má certainly didn't come up to the rest of his family; he said that no one else would have treated him so badly.

"Will you listen to this!" said Má. "It is monstrous if I have to take such rude words from you."

Má then took away from Óláf everything that he had in the way of possessions, his chest, his clothes, and even his weapon. Óláf told Hneitir how things had turned out. Hneitir said that Má could not have meant to do that and he spoke to Má, asking him to have Óláf's possessions and chest returned, saying, furthermore, that Óláf's lot was hard enough since he was not being paid. Má replied that nothing Hneitir said in the situation would help. Hneitir then thought matters were worse, and with that they parted.

A little later Hneitir told Má that he would no longer allow him to visit his house. The real reason was that Hneitir thought Má spent too much time talking with his daughter. Má said he didn't care what the countrymen up in Strandir said about his visits and that he would pay no attention.

5

Óláf Hildisson left Ávík then—he had lost all his possessions—and went to Saurbær, into Staðarhól. On the evening he reached

Staðarhól the weather was poor; Þorgils bóndi was sitting beside the fire with his housecarles when Óláf entered; Þorgils noticed him and recognized him, then invited him in. He said it looked as if Óláf were in the money, inasmuch as he seemed to have sold his weapons and his clothes; and, he added, "We will hardly have to buy fish from anyone else but you."

"Things are worse than that," said Óláf.

Óláf then spent the night there, told Þorgils of his difficulties and asked him for help. Þorgils let him stay on and asked the mistress of the house to get him some clothes. Óláf tried to find out what advice if any Þorgils would offer; Þorgils said it would be best for Óláf to go to Má and see if he could get back his belongings. But Óláf said he was not prepared to do this. "For I have no hope of a good word from him," he said.

"Still, that's my advice—that you try, for your own self-respect. But I see that you have no weapon."

And Þorgils put a great axe in Óláf's hand, saying, "Now you look not unlike a hired assassin."

They parted and Óláf traveled north until he reached Ávík. It was not late in the day. Hneitir was not at home, but the mistress of the house was sitting on the main bench; Óláf went over to it until he was face to face with the mistress. She asked him the news.

Má was lying on a bench nearer the outside and had laid his head in Rannveig's lap—Rannveig was the daughter of Hneitir bóndi. While he was listening to Óláf he sat up, letting one leg hang down in front of the bench. He was wearing a woollen coat. Óláf turned from the main seat and went along in front of Má, then asked, "How are you, Má? How do you like things now?"

Má said, "What difference does that make to you? You will find it's all the same whether I'm content or not—but, at the moment, I am not well pleased."

Then Óláf spoke to him quietly, asking if he would be willing to pay compensation for having seized Óláf's possessions. He spoke politely but Má answered rudely, saying that no word or counsel of Þorgils Oddason should have any effect. Óláf then struck at Má but the wound was only skin-deep, not to the bone.

Óláf went outside and Má wanted to rush after him, but Þorstein ran up, held Má back and pushed him back on the bench. Má was furiously angry at this and said he would do the same thing to Þorstein if he prevented Má from avenging himself. But Þorstein paid no attention to Má's words. Má then urged Hneitir's sons to go out to avenge him. The boys ran out, but their mother ran after them and told them not to get mixed up in this quarrel. Óláf went off on his way and the women bound up Má's wound. Má was ill-pleased with this; a little later he sprang up at Þorstein and struck him dead. Þorstein fell back into his mother's arms. Now Hneitir came home and immediately turned Má out, predicting that great trouble would always accompany him.

"I'll leave this time," said Má, "but I don't expect I'll pay much attention to your prophecies."

Then he went to meet his kinsman Hafliði, told him about the killing of Þorstein and all the events which followed, and about the way matters stood now. Hafliði showed that he was displeased by the deed and said that Má had long been of no use whatsoever; he asserted that such men were most truly called a disgrace to their kin.

6

Now it is time to tell how Hneitir, the bóndi from Ávík, went to talk with Hafliði Másson. Hafliði received Hneitir warmly and said that he would give compensation for the unfortunate actions of his nephew, that he would pay ten hundreds and three alna of *aurar*[8] for the slaying of Þorstein,—"or else, you can give me his household, home and dependents, and I will look after them. Otherwise, your choice is to accept the money and the dependents yourself."

Hneitir was well pleased with Hafliði's declaration and spent several days there.

Next it is reported that a man named Hrafn came to see Má; he was named for his mother and so known as Finngerð's son;[9] he was a big, powerful man, overbearing, and a real vagabond. They took counsel together and Má said, "What position would you most like to choose for yourself?"

Hrafn said, "It would suit me best to be with men who are proud and high-born, and to offer them my services."

Má said, "Such a man as you would suit me well."

Hrafn said, "It sometimes happens that you strike forth boldly, but when the word of powerful men reaches you, you at once stand stock-still."

Má said, "That is well phrased but I do not think that it will turn out to be true of me."

They went to Ávík together and stayed at Hneitir's home while he was away; they decided that Má was to sleep with the bóndi's daughter and Hrafn with his wife. Hneitir learned what they were up to, set off at once and started for home secretly. He meant to arrive home unexpectedly, early in the day; he had several men with him. When Má knew that Hneitir meant to return home he took stock of the situation, and the same morning that Hneitir was expected Má told Hrafn to get up and not wait for Hneitir. They went to the river which was open in midstream but solidly frozen along the banks. Má ran across, for he was strong and light-footed. But just as Hrafn was about to run after him Hneitir and his men struck him across the buttocks so that he fell forward to the ground. Then they picked him up and carried him off for treatment.

Má continued on his way until he came to Jörund in Oddbjarnareyjar; he behaved as if nothing but good could be expected of him and asked Jörund to take him in, which he did. Then Má asked that they try to get hold of his property in Ávík. Jörund said he would not go on any hostile expedition against the bóndi Hneitir. Má said that he and Hneitir had an agreement with one another, so Jörund went off with Má and they reached Ávík early in the morning.

Má said to Jörund, "I'll go in now but you stay outside."

Má entered; Hneitir was resting and called out, asking who was walking about there. Má struck in the direction of his voice; Hneitir sprang up, seized a piece of wood in his hand and ran across the floor. Má struck at the wood and they struggled with one another for some time until Má called out, "You ought to be

ashamed of yourself, Jörund, treating a man like this, standing nearby while someone is killing me."

At that Jörund ran in and struck Hneitir his death blow.

They went away then and Má said, "You're a fool and a very unlucky fellow, for you have now killed a man, a good bóndi, with no cause. I am treating you better than you deserve in not killing you myself. Off you go now as fast as you can, while I try to meet my kinsman Hafliði."

Jörund went off to his ship then; it is reported that a storm struck it and he died. Má went to meet with Hafliði and told him what had happened. Hafliði upbraided him for all the evil he had committed, and said that he was quite unlike the rest of his family. But for the sake of their kinship Hafliði thought he could not avoid responsibility for the case.

7

Þorgils Oddason made a trip north to Strandir as was often his custom. Björg and her sons came to meet Þorgils and asked him to take up their case; they had no desire to seek a meeting with Hafliði, largely because Má was already there and they thought this would result in some chagrin for them. Þorgils said he could not be bound to take on a case in which Hafliði's Þingmen were involved. Björg was very insistent, and when Þorgils saw that he said it was true she had no easy choice before her: "For it won't be an easy matter to conduct a case against Hafliði. I am willing to pay twelve hundreds in wadmal for the slaying of Hneitir,[10] but I am to get whatever the case against Hafliði and his kinsmen yields."

And on this they were agreed.

But when Hafliði learned this, he thought matters had taken a worse turn than he'd expected; he said this was no reparation for the slaying of Hneitir, and that they had acted as if they had no obligations whatsoever to him; he declared he had expected more honorable behavior than this.

Þorgils prepared this case for the Alþing.[11] Hafliði also prepared his case against Óláf Hildisson, who was then staying with

Þorgils at Staðarhól. Both Þorgils and Hafliði rode to the Þing with their prepared cases. Before Þorgils rode from home he sent Óláf south to Eyr to a man named Árni, called fjöruskeif; he had been a homeman of Þorgils in the winter. Together with another man named Hermund Þorvaldsson, a brother of Þórð of Vatnsfjörð, he had a ship which was then laid up ashore. They had both been on a voyage with Jórsala-Sigurð[12] and had been companions ever since. Þorgils sent word to Árni asking him to get Óláf out of the country.

"For I clearly see," said Þorgils, "how this matter will turn out. You will be outlawed[13] but I will try to arrange a reconciliation, and I will offer payment so that you can leave the country."

8

There was a man named Snorri, known as Mág-Snorri, who lived in Saurbær, beyond Lower Múli. He was married to Hallbera, the daughter of Snorri Þórðarson, Sturla's son; she was a niece of Þuríð who was married to Hafliði Másson. Grím was the name of their son, a young chap, late in maturing. Snorri was very wealthy and had a pasture in Svínadal which is now called Snorri's Stead. He drowned in Sælingsdalsá, at a place now called Snorri's Shallows. His kinsman Sighvat Úlfsson and four others then set out to look for the body; but a snow-slide buried them and they too all lost their lives.

When Óláf was traveling from Staðarhól south to Eyr, he stole a horse from Snorri's Stead in Múli because he had little taste for walking; he rode on until he came to his meeting with Árni, who took him in and let him stay on there in hiding.

Þorgils' men now came to the Þing and an attempt was made towards a reconciliation between the chieftains; Þorgils said that he would not pursue this case obstinately, but that he had undertaken it for the sake of helping his kinsmen out of trouble, at their entreaty. Hafliði spoke the same way about the case, as if he would not refuse to accept compensation. Each of them presented his case vigorously: Þorgils about the slaying of Hneitir, a good bóndi and his kinsman, and Hafliði about the injury to

Má. The end of the case was that they agreed on a settlement: thirty hundreds were to be paid for the slaying of Hneitir, nine hundreds for the injury to Má, and the terms of Óláf's outlawry were that for three summers he should have the right to look for passage abroad, without infringing on his right to be maintained in Iceland, and was to have sanctuary in Þorgils' company or on his lands, but be treated as an outlaw in any other place. Hafliði paid Þorgils the fine as stipulated for the slaying of Hneitir. These verses were composed at that time:

1. Hafliði's toll
   To Þorgils, victorious,
   —More fame than fairness—
   Thirty hundreds that fine.
   In summer they spoke
   Their honorable oaths,
   Oddi's famed son
   Won wergild for Hneitir.

2. So Hafliði paid
   Thirty hundreds in fine:
   Though brave he yet feared
   The heir of Oddi.
   Welcome such wergild
   For Hneitir of Strandir:
   Thus men could acclaim
   Þorgils, the all-wise.

3. Hafliði paid out
   This wergild for Hneitir—
   The heir of Oddi
   Was a famous protector.
   Nimble-witted, he proved
   —So men long remember,
   And I often versify—
   A true man of honor.

9

It is now time to tell that some merchants in Eyr were getting ready for sea when Óláf was there in hiding with Árni fjöruskeif. During the day they were carrying their goods aboard. Óláf went out to the ship with his possessions; he was wearing his hat on the back of his head. Hermund, a captain, had a look at him, then went over to him and asked who he was. Óláf didn't know what to answer.

"Aren't you Óláf Hildisson?"

He ran at Óláf then and threw him off the gangway into the water so that other men had to help him out; then Hermund refused Óláf passage. This led to discussion among the captains but did not interfere with the work of the ship which then put out to sea.

Óláf however remained ashore and went west to Þorgils who took him in. It was known then throughout that region that Óláf was staying with Þorgils at Staðarhól. Má Bergþórsson was staying with Hafliði at that time. He went west from Hafliði's home to Saurbær; on his journey he ran into some men who were on their way to buy dulse, and from them he had news of Óláf's whereabouts; he then lay in wait for a chance to kill him. Þorgils learned of Má's journey, drew his own conclusions about Má's intentions, and said to Óláf, "Now what do you plan to do, Óláf? I have learned that Má has come from the north with these men, has never entered any homestead, but is out lying in wait to avenge himself on you."

Óláf said: "I am inclined to follow your advice."

Þorgils said: "There are wet moors near the homestead here, as you know. I shall send you out to them with a scythe to cut turf. When they see you they will think they have your fate in their hands. But it may be that their course will not be as easy as they expect."

Óláf went out. Þorgils sent almost all the men away from the homestead and also let Óláf's whereabouts be known; thus he dangled this bait before Má and his followers.

Má and his men now learned that there were no men at home at Staðarhól and that Óláf was outdoors, and on their road. Má

said, "It may be that we are about to hook a fish."

They rode out on the moors toward Óláf, but many of their horses sank deep into the bog and the going was slow and difficult. Óláf turned home toward the farmstead and they intended to ride after him. At this moment a crowd of women emerged from the house at Staðarhól, breeches pulled up over their skirts[14] and sword in hand. Má and his men dismounted, intending to catch Óláf on foot since the horses couldn't come up with him. But when the women emerged from the house Má and his men fled. They wanted to return to their horses but couldn't reach them, so escaped by running and could thank their feet that they got away at all.

After this Þorgils paid no attention to them and they went on until they came north to Hafliði, little pleased with their journey. Hafliði let it be seen that he was displeased by their expedition and said he expected Má would have no luck in his conflict with Þorgils, and, he added, "would make no more such expeditions from home."

The next half-year passed, the next summer came, and Óláf did not find a passage abroad.

10

Yngvild Þórð's daughter was living at that time in Ísafjörð. She was a wealthy and a worthy woman. Her husband had died but they had two daughters. One was Helga, the other Hallfríð. That same spring she moved from the west to Reykjahólar to Ingimund the priest and they set up housekeeping together.

Ingimund was the son of Einar Arason, a cousin of Þorgils Oddason. Ingimund was a most worthy man, a good skáld, a great show-off both in temperament and in manners, a man always the life of the party and one who provided many sorts of entertainment. He was also a very wise man and did a good deal to make himself popular with the common people. Furthermore he was highly thought of by many notable men.[15] When Ingimund's father Einar died Ingimund gave the Reyknesing-goðorð to his kinsman Þorgils, as was told earlier; their fellowship remained firm in all respects as long as they were both alive.

During the summer a man named Óláf asked for the hand of Helga, Yngvild's daughter, and their wedding was agreed on. The celebration was to be at Reykjahólar at the time of the Feast of St. Óláf during the summer. Among the first Ingimund and Yngvild wanted to invite to the feast was Þorgils Oddason. Yngvild then invited Þórð Þorvaldsson from Vatnsfjörð. Hrólf of Skálmarnes was also at this feast and a large company of other goodly men; still, Þorgils and Þórð were the most notable men who were present.

Men were arranged in their places now, and Þorgils with his company sat along one bench with the priest Ingimund, while Þórð was on the other bench, opposite Þorgils. Þórð said to his companions, "I think that something is going to happen at this celebration, something that will make me wish I was somewhere else, considering the men who are gathered together here. I had far rather have remained at home in Vatnsfjörð if I had had the choice; I cannot be certain that some of our enemies aren't here, and I would much prefer to have everything under my control."

His companions said, "Many more men of good will have gathered together here than could mean harm to anyone by deceit or treachery. Nor has any man come here with so honored a reception as you received—except Þorgils Oddason. Furthermore, the hosts of this celebration are not greater friends to anyone than they are to you."

Þórð said this was true and now appeared content. The table was then brought forward and people sat packed together on both the back benches and the movable benches.[16] Everything necessary was offered adequately and properly; generosity was unstinted, and there was no shortage of good drink. Ingimund the priest then called on Þorgils to deliver the toasts, but Þorgils turned to Þórð and asked him to decide whose health they should drink first. Þórð was very merry at this, and said to the priest Ingimund that some of his friends should open the feast; but he added that he would support whatever entertainment they wanted to initiate. They all now drank happily and the drink soon made them boastful.

Þórð was not much of a drinking man, and was somewhat

difficult to feed, as often happens with those who know ill health; he was getting on in years, although he was still vigorous. He suffered from some internal complaint and therefore had an uneasy digestion; he found it difficult to eat meat, which made him draw breath with difficulty, so that he belched, and his breath was somewhat sour. Þórð was an imposing man in appearance: he had large, well-set eyes; his fair hair was receding slightly at the forehead; he often stared up into the air and his head continually trembled slightly.

Everyone now began to drink heavily and grew somewhat intoxicated. Men became talkative and one can even say that everyone was taunting someone else with gibes—though few of these witticisms are given in this account. Men tell how Ingimund the priest bent toward his table-companion and said, as if the other had put a question to him:

4. "Whence comes this stink?"
   "Þórð is breathing at table."

There was loud laughter, followed by considerable delight at this mockery. When this let up Þórð versified in return:

5. "Ingimund's breath
   Brings no boon to the bench."

And from these taunts the game began to grow serious, and lampoons were then delivered. This verse was aimed at Þórð:

6. Whistling in the windpipe
   Marks the mighty man.
   Your goði's skull
   Shines baldly above.

Þórð laughed heartily at this raillery and at once spoke this verse:

7. The blasts of breath
   Blow on the bench above.
   Pretty bad the air,
   The stench of your belch.

Þorgils smiled at this, but offered no return compliment. Ingimund said that one or another of their bench-companions should give Þórð an answer. This verse was then offered:

8. Harmlessly
We belch,
Booth-mates,
Beef-eating.
Þórð belches—
Son of Þorvald
Kjartan's son—
Tankard-winded.

Þórð looked toward the sound of this mocking verse and thought it came from over on one of the movable benches, where there sat a very powerful man with a thick head of hair. Þórð asked the mistress of the house to talk with him, and then asked who that wavy-haired man might be, the one sitting on the movable bench in front of Þorgils' seat; he pointed him out to her. She said, "That is Óláf Hildisson."

Þórð said, "We will not both remain long at this feast; pack him off to another homestead or else I shall ride away at once with my company."

She was slow to answer but then said, "Your presence here is an honor to us, but I cannot make the decision to send away a companion of Þorgils; Óláf will not try your patience further with his words."

Others overheard some of their conversation now, and Þorgils asked what they found to talk about together. She spoke to Þorgils, begging him in forbearance to send Óláf away and not spoil the pleasure of his guests.

Þorgils replied, "Óláf was given this assurance, that he would be safe with me but treated as an outlaw anywhere else; for this reason I will not send a man to his death. Þórð can leave if he wants to but Óláf is not to go. Anyhow, we will behave now so that Þórð may well be able to stay on."

Þórð got up from the table then, sighed sadly, but said nothing This verse was then recited:

9. From dawn to dark
On the day of the feast
Foul were the smells
From his byrnied breast.
Heroes held their noses
As, generous, he belched—
Men shrank on the benches
Beneath this stench.[17]

It is not reported that Þórð retorted to this obloquy, but he and all his company went away; their weapons and clothes were made ready for them and they rode off to another homestead overnight.

As Þórð was going out someone spoke this verse:

10. The goði belched and we
Who went by—the hair
Stood high on his neck—
All had to say "Phew!"

It is told how Þórð was escorted out to this taunt, but it is not told that anyone spoke of giving him gifts.

Þorgils and his companions remained behind, as did the bridegroom and the other wedding-guests, and Þorgils' companions thought the departure of Þórð and his men rather comical. There was increased merriment and joy now, good entertainment and many sorts of amusements—dancing, wrestling, and storytelling. The celebration lasted for seven whole nights, for in any summer when two *sálds*[18] worth of corn could be brought there was an Óláf's Guild meeting at the Þorsnes Þing, and there were many guild-brothers at the celebration. At Reykjahólar there was such good choice of land in those times that there were never any barren fields. It was always their expectation to have new meal to offer to guests and fine things for feasting, for the Feast of St. Óláf was celebrated each summer.

About such occasions it is sometimes reported, though it is not in itself very important, who told stories and about whom stories were told. This is contained in an account which many now deny and pretend not to have known; for many men reject the truth,

think that what is invented is true, and that what is true is a lie. Hrólf from Skálmarnes told a saga about Hröngvið the viking[19] and about Óláf, the Liðsmen's King,[20] about the barrow-robber, Þráin the berserk, and about Hrómund Grípsson[21]—with many strophes too. These sagas delighted King Sverri who said such lying stories[22] were very enjoyable. Men could even trace their lineage back to Hrómund Grípsson. Hrólf himself had put this saga together. Ingimund the priest told the Saga of Orm the Skáld of Barra,[23] with many verses and, towards the end of the saga, many good *flokkrs*[24] which Ingimund himself had composed. Furthermore, many wise men believed these sagas were true.

11

This same autumn Þorgils Oddason bought Múliland from Grím Snorrason and his mother. With the money they bought Tunguland in Svínadal and lived there in the same place for a year.

The games now began at Saurbær; Grím went to seek some sport at Staðarhól, where Óláf Hildisson and Grím Snorrason often contended with one another. Óláf was a good player, rough and impetuous; but Grím was not strong—a weak though a very plucky man. He was therefore often in a sad plight when he faced Óláf, and an object of jeers and mockery from the spectators. Grím said it was unkind of them to treat him like a laughing-stock and make fun of him. They found this rather amusing too and so offered him no more comfort than at any other time. Grím then left home and went south across the heath to Sælingsdalstunga. The priest Má Þormóðarson, a kinsman of Hafliði Másson, was living there then. Grím told him what had occurred. Má invited Grím to stay with him for Christmas and said: "After Christmas I am going north to my kinsman Hafliði; come with me to see him and tell him your troubles."

Grím was pleased with this and stayed with Má until after Christmas. Then they both went north and reached Hafliði's, where they received a warm welcome. There were many people

there and much merriment. Hafliði and Má the priest often talked together, and when they were getting ready to leave, Hafliði led them down to the road and talked amicably with them at parting. Má asked Grím what he had thought of their stay there. He said he was pleased, and, "Here," said Grím, "I have lived as seemed very pleasant to me; that man would be happily situated who stayed here for a long time. But still, I had hoped to talk with Hafliði more than I did."

"Turn back, then," said Má, "and talk to Hafliði about whatever you think right, for he always took your remarks very well."

So Grím turned back and called out to Hafliði, who returned to meet Grím and welcomed him. Grím told how things had gone in the western part of the country; he said the reason he had sought out Hafliði with so much difficulty over such a long road was that he expected Hafliði would for kinship's sake be of some assistance, and he added that he didn't think anyone else was so hostile to him as Óláf Hildisson.

"I understand what you are saying," Hafliði replied. "I will not urge you on to any futile action, but whatever you take in hand I will consider you like my own son."

Grím then mounted his horse and bade Hafliði farewell. He reached home in Saurbær. Men began to gibe at him, saying that he had run away from the games and dared not return the challenge, but he paid no heed to them. So things went on far into Lent. Þorgils prepared to journey from his home then and talked with Óláf, telling him he wanted him to stay at home all the time he himself was away: "Because matters will be rather more difficult than if I were at home, *and* you must look after my horses."

He added that he expected to return home in the last week of Easter. The time passed until then but Þorgils did not return. Óláf worked at home on the farmstead as he had been told. Men say that when the Dumb Bell Days[25] came a host of people came there for the services on Maundy Thursday. Grím had come, and after evening service he went up to Óláf and said, "Are you supposed to be looking after Þorgils' horses somewhow? They're out on our land at present and no one is looking after them."

Óláf answered, "I was put in charge of them and I will go out for them now."

They went out together; Óláf had an axe in his hand while Grím had a club. Óláf said, "I am being imprudent now, going out alone in the night with you: relations between us are rather uncertain, and no man ever does know where he may meet an enemy, or what may be his fortune once he leaves his home."

Grím replied, "There is nothing to be feared now; I have a club, but you have an axe. I realized that even if we were evenly armed you might not think us equally powerful."

Óláf replied, "We must now agree that when men are engaged in sport together—and such is now our case—there is no need to consider such things."

They went on together to Laxá, where many horses had gone out on the moors during the winter. Óláf wanted to catch Þorgils' mare and throw a bridle on the stallion, but Grím was collecting other mares along the way. The stallion became unruly when he saw the other mares and Óláf could scarcely manage to hold him. In the violent struggle with the stallion, Óláf's axe fell from his hand. At that Grím walked over to him, seized the axe and wounded Óláf mortally; then he rode home, thinking he could see now that his sojourn there would not last very much longer. He went north at once and quickly, across the heath to Bitrá, so on to Hrútafjörð, and on the Saturday before Easter he came to see Hafliði, who bade him welcome.

After Easter Week Hafliði sent Grím to the Lawspeaker Finn Hallsson in the East Fjords at Hofsteig—Finn was married to Halldís, a daughter of Bergþór Másson, Hafliði's brother—and Finn got him a passage abroad. When Grím came back to Iceland he established himself there in the East Fjords, thinking he would become a good provider, but he was slain by his housecarles.

12

Now it is told that Óláf's body was carried home and a tent raised over it in the churchyard. During the day Þorgils rode from the south across the ridge and stayed for a time with Þorð Rufey-

jaskáld in Hvammsdal. Þórð had composed a verse about Þorgils but it had not been rewarded. Þorgils had been given a fine axe; Þórð had taken up the axe, looked at it, and asked what they thought the axe was worth. They guessed it was worth about two marks. Þórð then spoke this strophe:

11. Two marks it merits,
Black-shanks would be fine
If it were faultless,
And none I'd prefer.
This well-wrought axe
Should richly reward
Such a man for his verses:
Few are so seldom repaid.

Þorgils said that Þórð might own the whole earth without paying for it, but he still had no right to full use of the axe. Þorgils came home that day and the news was brought to him; he then had Óláf's body buried in the church.

13

In the spring men say that a man named Ketil came to Þorgils and begged him for help and protection. He was an Eastfirðing, and an outlaw. Þorgils said, "You will not be free to refuse me anything if I take you in."

Ketil answered, "If I refuse you, once you've taken me in, then you will be free of all obligation to me and can turn me off the place. But I am not a lucky man, and your luck will often have to fill in for mine if things are to go well."

He spent that spring with Þorgils and one day during that time Þorgils said to Ketil, "I intend to send you north to Vestrhóp, and the journey is not without purpose."

Then Þorgils put before Ketil a plan for him to kill one of Hafliði Másson's men. Ketil said, "I will go; but I am not cut out for success."

They prepared for his expedition and he kept going without a night's stop until he reached Hafliði Másson's in Vestrhóp; he

told Hafliði then about his mission and all his perplexities; he added that he was an outlaw, that Þorgils was in charge of the prosecution of his case, and that he himself had begged Þorgils for protection and refuge. He stayed with Hafliði then and men thought well of him.

14

There was a man named Steinólf. He was an Eastfirðing by family but had been outlawed because of various crimes which he had committed in the East Fjords. After these he had struck out to meet Hafliði, who took him in and made him a homeman. One day in the spring it was arranged that Ketil and Steinólf should work together setting up lamb-folds. They left the house early in the day; they talked together a good deal and neither was on his guard against the other. But as they parted Ketil attacked Steinólf and killed him in the lamb-fold; he went off then to proclaim the slaying—which was no danger to him. He kept going until he reached home at Staðarhól and reported on his expedition. Þorgils showed that he was pleased with the work and said he had had a successful journey.

15

Now it must be told at the same time that it seemed to folk in Vestrhóp as if Ketil and Steinólf were late in returning home in the evening, and men were sent to find out what had happened.

Hafliði said, "If any such mishap has occurred that you believe either of them dead by man's hand, do nothing about the body until I can come, for 'mickle comes of muckle,' as they say."

They looked right away into the lamb-fold and discovered Steinólf but not Ketil, as was to be expected. Men now brought back word to Hafliði who went at once to the fold; he looked in, as did the men with him, and saw that a hand bare from the wrist forward was sticking up from beneath the turf. There Hafliði bore witness that the corpse was not buried, and he prepared his case for the Alþing, in the expectation that Ketil would receive less than full outlawry.

Þorgils also prepared his case about the slaying of Óláf Hildisson, on the ground that he was a man who had the right of sanctuary; he asserted that he was considered legally safe when in Þorgils' following or on his land. After that each side crowded to the Þing and a reconciliation was sought. Hafliði claimed that Óláf had fallen as an outlaw because he was killed on land other than that where he had been granted sanctuary. Þorgils replied to this by asking if sanctuary had not been given to Óláf so that he should be safe whenever he was "in my following or on my land."

Hafliði presented his argument but Þorgils said, "How can you call Óláf an outlaw? I call that 'my property' wherever I own the land."

Hafliði said, "I will give Þorgils the price of eight cows because of his honor and worthiness, but I call this a gift, and in no way a fine."

Their disagreement was such that one of them was sorry he did not have to pay anything, and the other preferred to pay a small penalty in the case rather than offer a gift. Each thought his honor at stake whether it was so expressed or not. And they were so at odds that they came to no reconciliation. They parted, each thinking less of the other than before.

16

It is told that on the morning of the Feast of St. Peter at the Þing all the groups went to the church to hear Mass and listen to the Gospel. They were standing outside the church with their weapons, the main strength of each chieftain in front of the church doors. Hafliði's group stood to the north of the church doors while Hall Fáluson was posted nearby. South of the church doors stood Þórð of Vatnsfjörð with his district-men, and south from there was Hall Teitsson with several men. West of the church, opposite the church doors, stood Þorgils Oddason and his men, with Böðvar Ásbjarnarson; there were many companies of men near them.

Then Þorgils Oddason said to Böðvar Ásbjarnarson: "Take

my axe to Hafliði Másson now, and there will be more to talk about than the price of eight cows."

"You must be mad," said Böðvar, reaching out toward him and speaking to him sternly.

"I am not out of my mind," said Þorgils.

"Well, that's true," answered Böðvar.

"Then what do you mean?" said Þorgils.

Böðvar said, "You don't look at things properly. Consider where we are; we came to make our peace with God, whom we have sought out in divine services and have prayed to show His mercy to us. This peace of the church would now be broken by your action, which would be a crime. And another thing—the holy day is now in force, when we all have some hope for salvation and God Almighty Himself lets His grace and mercy shine so greatly as to brighten this day. Yet another fact to be considered is that truce and peace have been established at the Þing for as long as the Þing is hallowed;[26] therefore, this action would be a very great breach of the law."

After they had talked together Þorgils held back and did not attack Hafliði. But when they went back to their booths Þorgils said to Böðvar: "Men say that you are not a Christian, kinsman, and not overly benevolent—but that is not true of you today."

Böðvar replied: "What you say is true, but my faith didn't so weaken my reason that I let you assault Hafliði; rather, I thought about more than we expressed; for I saw that forces were standing on both sides of us, and that we were in a trap. And I realized that if things went on that way it might turn into a fight, and each of our comrades would be killed one after the other. But I did not say this to you, for I know your turn of mind, and I knew that you would have paid no attention if I had brought forward such an argument. But if there had not been that danger, I would never have cared if you killed him within the peace of the Church or within the sanctuary of the Þing."

Both sides now sought support in the Court, and each gathered as large a following as he could. Hafliði took his axe in his hand before he left his booth for the Court, though it had not hitherto been his custom to do so; he gave almost always the same counsel

in every case with which he was concerned, for he was blessed with followers and with kinsmen. His wife Rannveig now said, "What's this, Hafliði? Have you now taken to carrying a weapon, which you never used to do? Keep to your own ways."

She was a wise woman and understood many things very clearly. Hafliði answered rather harshly, saying that it was none of her business, and flinging some other words back at her. Þorgils now went to the Court with a big following and presented his case about the slaying of Óláf Hildisson. Þorgils too had made his preparations, for he wore a sealskin cloak over his byrnie, was wearing breeches, and carried an axe in his hand.

17

This also is reported: Þórð Magnússon of Reykjaholt dreamed about the Þing when he was at home in Reykjaholt. It seemed to him that a man came to him, and he thought he asked where the man came from. He said he had come from the Þing. Þórð thought that he asked the man for news, and the man told him the talk of the Þing. Þórð then thought he asked if anyone had brought forward at the Þing a case likely to lead to a quarrel.

"There is one notably strange thing," said the dream-man, "for one man, Þórir called dritloki, has taken it upon himself to work in all the booths."

Þórð interpreted the dream to mean that all the cases would be brought to a clean end before the Þing was adjourned.

18

Next it is reported that Hafliði went to the law courts with a large group of men, meaning to overturn the Court. But Þorgils and his men had arrived in a large crowd which stretched far and wide, and Hafliði was shoved backwards and forwards in this crowd. When it had gone on like this for some time during the day, many wise men demanded that they try again to reach a reconciliation. Hafliði then made the same offer he had made earlier, but now men were willing to listen to what was said, and

some space was made in the throng. Þorgils said he could not catch Hafliði's words and managed to move over to a place where only a few men stood between him and Hafliði. Þorgils saw Hafliði's axe come up and he struck over another man's shoulder so that the blow fell on Hafliði Másson's hand, on the shaft of his axe; it severed his longest finger and cut the joint of the smallest finger as well as of those in between.

Men then jumped in between them so that Þorgils had to drop the axe as men thronged around Hafliði; but Þorgils at once wrested a great axe from the hand of a man in Hafliði's forces. His name was Þormóð and he was known as læknir. This same Þormóð bound up Hafliði Másson's hand and healed it so that two fingers lay folded in over the palm, but the other three fingers he healed as stumps. Once Hafliði had been wounded the Þing came to an end, and all Hafliði's company returned to their booths.

When he entered his booth where his wife Rannveig was sitting, Hafliði said, "I have often had occasion to know how fortunate I am in my wife, and it is clear to me again that you are a very wise woman—indeed, almost a prophetess—for I would not have suffered these injuries if I had listened to your advice."

His hand was then bound up and he went to the Law Rock.[27] His wounds were proclaimed and Hafliði and his men demanded that they open the courts a second time—but that the other side was not to bring forward more judges than those who were already in their following.[28] Three times they brought the judges toward the seats of the Court, but still the Court could not be seated. Then Hafliði called men to witness that he could not reach the Court because of Þorgils' superior numbers. So they moved the Court east onto the lava, near Byrgisbooth.[29] The chasm protected it on three sides and an entrenchment protected it on the fourth.

In this Court Þorgils Oddason was pronounced a full outlaw, without sanctuary. That was the single case of all those brought to that Court which was concluded there. After that men went to the Law Rock and proclaimed his outlawry. And when men had gone back to their booths, it was learned what wounds Hafliði had suffered, although people did not know for certain

what had happened or how serious it was. Böðvar Ásbjarnarson and the priest Ingimund Einarsson were sent to inquire into the case of Hafliði's wounds. Many other men also went with them to meet with Þorgeir Hallason, who was married to Hallbera, Einar's daughter, and was a sister of Ingimund the priest. Böðvar shared a booth with Þórólf Sigmundarson, but he had greater authority among the Þingmen and the retinue of that booth-company than Þórólf had. Thus people were used to saying that although Böðvar rode pillion behind Þórólf he still held the reins and chose their course.

And when they returned to Þorgils' booth men asked them for the news, and how their journey had gone. Ingimund the priest then spoke this verse:

12. Three fingers severed—
Though from that great man
More should be taken—
Still, it's no small loss.

A Court of Execution[30] was then summoned; after that men rode home to their district but Þorgils nevertheless stayed at his own homestead. When the time approached for the Court of Execution Þorgils gathered men around him—almost four hundred men in all. Hafliði had one hundred from the north, a select company both in equipment and renown. A third group of certain men of the district gathered themselves together as an accompanying force for the reconciliation. At their head was Þórð Gilsson with Hunbógi Þorgilsson from Skarð; with them were also other honorable men—Guðmund Brandsson and Örnólf Þorgilsson from Kvennabrekka, with two hundred men to assist in the reconciliation. But Þorgils intended to defend the whole district by fighting so that Hafliði and his men could not gain an inch in Saurbær. Þorgils meant to defend the slopes of Sælingsdalsheið if they rode in there, or Mjósund if they rode into Svínadal. Only a few men can ride side-by-side there, for there are steep cliffs on both sides.

19

It is reported that the evening before the Court of Execution Hafliði and his company rode to stay with Má the priest in Sælingsdalstunga, and he had forty men ready for Hafliði's troop. Among them rode Guðmund Brandsson, a cousin of Þorgils, son of Steinun Ari's daughter. He was a most worthy man, held in great esteem in important affairs, and was very often named in the list of elections for the choice of bishop in the West Fjords Quarter—second to Klæng. Guðmund was a good friend of Hafliði. He and some other men rode to negotiate between the two, wanting to effect a compromise in their quarrel; he asked Hafliði what intentions he had for his journey:

"Please proceed cautiously and always keep in mind your worth and your honor, because there are many large forces ahead of you whom you have not enough strength to fight. Men have a great deal at stake if things don't turn out well, and there is no dishonor in drawing up your case according to the law when you reach the farthest point you can without endangering yourself. I myself will join with those whom I can reach, and with whom my word carries the most weight, to try to bring them round to your side. Follow the advice of your friend, and don't pursue this matter any further than you can keep your honor unscathed."

Hafliði said, "This is truly well said, in a friendly spirit, and I will certainly follow such counsel; it is both good and sensible and yet offers manly choices."

Guðmund rode then to meet Þorgils and discover what he had in mind to do, considering that so large a force had gathered around him, equipped as if for battle in weapons and in other ways. Þorgils said that he thought it best he should try to prevent Hafliði and his group from advancing far into Saurbær and that he would defend the hills of Sælingsdal, or of Mjósund, if they rode into Svínadal.

Guðmund then replied, "Let's have no talk of that. You must consider with what a prominent man you have to deal in this lawsuit. You will win a name for yourself for acting fearlessly even if you take upon yourself nothing more than the defense of your homestead and the place where the Court of Execution

should be held—or, at the most, your own property. But if you behave with an arrogance greater than all other men's then I fear you will have to suffer insolence and violence before your case with Hafliði comes to an end. For I have never heard that any man succeeded by such arrogance, or obtained what he wanted. Don't pursue your plans stubbornly. Instead, take the advice of your friends, for in your pride you cannot see the matter clearly. Hafliði means to go ahead, calmly and tolerantly, but it is still likely that he will carry through his case in the end. You will want then to give some thought to our words—we who are your friends—and not lead many other men into great difficulties."

Finally he won a promise from Þorgils about this. At that very moment those men came riding up whom Þorgils had sent out to spy on the movements of Hafliði and his company, and they were able to report that he meant to ride into Sælingsdal. Þorgils then told his men to ride out against Hafliði and his forces and they all rode straight on until they came up into Steinshyl at Þverdalsá. There they waited for Hafliði and his forces while the men of that district came up to negotiate between them. There were high crags east of the river and steep sand-hills west of it. If there were a large group of men one could not ride past but must go almost single file.

Hafliði and his men rode forward and dismounted. He called witnesses that they could go no farther without danger. They held the Court of Execution there, although the place was not on land belonging to Staðarhól, and neither side attacked the other. After that Hafliði rode home northwards while Þorgils remained at his homestead with eighty armed men. Each side was on guard against the other during the summer.

20

A ship had come into Hrútafjörð in the winter; Þorgils had bought a great deal of timber to build a hall; he had moved it home except for one hundred of it;[31] Hafliði got that amount from Þorgils as an outlaw's confiscated goods.

The hall was built during the year Þorgils was in outlawry,

and was still standing when Bishop Magnús Gizurarson died.[32] Einar Þorgilsson was born during the year Þorgils was in outlawry.

After that Hafliði sent word all around the countryside, summoning a force to assist him, both greater and lesser men. In the autumn a meeting was arranged between them—Hafliði, Hall Teitsson, and Þorð Þorvaldsson of Vatnsfjörð. This verse was then recited:

13. Gull-head came from the north
Seal-head from the south,
And Hart-head from the west[33]—
Secretly, silently.
Much they discussed
As wise men must,
While malice smouldered
In Gull-head's heart.

Now this year went by, everything happening more slowly than can be reported.

21

In the following spring Hafliði Másson went south across the heath to Haukadal on the day of the Feast of the Two Apostles,[34] to his kinsman Hall; he stayed there, enjoying great esteem; they talked together at length, after the church services ended for the day, about the case between Hafliði and Þorgils Oddason. Hafliði said he thought it hard to have to be involved in a case against Þorgils, because of his obstinacy and because of his large following. He spoke at great length and eloquently, asked for troops and furthermore asked his kinsman Hall for his help and support. He asked that a group of priests should also intercede to God for them, praying that the case end well and that matters proceed in the way best for all the inhabitants of the countryside, provided he maintained his own honor.

A man named Þorstein, from Drumb-Oddsstaðir, then said, "It seems to me most necessary for us to back you up, for you have long suffered injuries at the hands of Þorgils and have borne much indignity from him."

Hall Teitsson replied, "Þorstein, my friend, let us keep silence! Your words are most untimely, but we have no choice other than to hear them. You mean well but you are not achieving much. Hafliði has never spoken of injuries from Þorgils, but the case is, even so, important to him. The only man who is my friend is the man who will not support this suit."

22

In the course of the summer each of them collected a large following for the Alþing, and men rode into the Þing the day before the Feast of St. John.[35] The kinsmen Hafliði and Hall Teitsson with some further force reached the Þing early in the day; Hafliði rode in on Þorgils' booth and broke it all to pieces. Hall then urged Hafliði and his men to ride on against Þorgils with the forces they had called together, declaring that it was utterly disgraceful and outside the law for outlawed men to ride to a hallowed Þing: "Let us remember this—he did not allow a Court of Execution where by law it should have been held, until men beat on their weapons."[36]

They rode up then into the plain and settled down in ambush. Everything happened more slowly than the telling of it, for many men put in their views on the situation, arguing against an ambush: they said they thought each side would more quickly allow itself to be led toward a settlement if so many noble men took part in the mediation, arguing that many solutions might be found if a clash could first be avoided. Thus there was great delay; men rode no farther but dismounted.

The priest Ketil Þorsteinsson went up to them and asked, "Hafliði, are you in favor of an ambush?"

"Certainly," he said.

"All the same, it is not advisable," Ketil replied.

"Þorgils may or may not decide to ride in during the night by the normal route, even if he still means to bear himself defiantly."

Bishop Þorlák came up while they were deciding what to do about this, and he asked Hafliði to go back to his booth so that men might approach him there for a reconciliation.

He replied, "This issue—that an outlaw should ride into the hallowed Þing and thus defy the law of the land—is too important to me and concerns me too nearly to allow any possibility of discussion. Experience will soon show that if this attempt succeeds many other men will follow suit."

The bishop said, "What you say is true, but is it true, as we have been told, that during this year you have summoned to you a force from the whole countryside—chieftains, lesser men, even beggars, and every sort of lamed old carling?"

"That is indeed true," said Hafliði.

The bishop then said, "It shows humility for a man such as you to ask others to support you in their thoughts and prayers. Still, people will say that in this instance a clever man is deluded in more ways than one, if you want on your side all the most wretched people and against you all the noble men, whose feast day is tomorrow and whose splendor is next only to that of God's saints, according to God's own witness. His wrath will follow, and will fall on you, if you mean to spill the blood of many men in this affair; but it is greatly to be hoped that if you give up this plan now, for the sake of peace on the holy day, God and His champion John the Baptist will grant you an honorable outcome in this affair. And a second point, in comparison with which the first argument is almost meaningless, is that you will be rewarded in another world for what you now do in the name of God and John the Baptist."

Hafliði replied, "That's truly said—nevertheless, we must not be persuaded to convene the Þing in such lawless fashion that outlawed men may ride to it."

So it ended that Hafliði refused what the bishop asked. By that time there were twelve hundred men in the ambush.

23

Then the bishop forbade all priests to join Hafliði and bade all those present to join his own forces; many expressed their willingness to do so. But when Hafliði's force refused entry to Þorgils, men ran over to Þorgils' side and told him what had

happened; they met his group north of Sandvatn. There were seven hundred men there. Styrmir Hreinsson of Gilsbakki, a kinsman of Þorgils, was waiting. All the goðorð-men west of Bláskógaheið, were there with Þorgils except Þorð from Vatnsfjörð. They began to discuss the situation among themselves and most of them argued against riding to the Þing with so large a force.

Þorgils then said, "I know very well that even if they have as large a force as is reported there must be many who would prefer to be on my side if they dared, and who won't fight vigorously for Hafliði. There must also be many who will be pleased if either one of us dies and who won't care which of us comes out alive. But I know that I have in my following such trusted men and such fighters that each man would rather die in the footsteps of the man ahead than see me destroyed. Therefore, we will continue on our way."

Styrmir then came up with one hundred men and said: "We know it's true of almost everyone that none thinks his help fully repaid unless his help in battle has been repaid. We can see now that Þorgils thinks his help has not been fully repaid unless help in battle itself is repaid him. Those who have gathered here now are agreed that they will not give up the case before bringing it to a conclusion one way or another; they are all men willing to expose themselves to such great danger. But I want to know what purpose you have in going on to the Þing anyway—other than to show your arrogance and to lead many men into this great peril."

Þorgils said, "My business at the Þing is to offer Hafliði a very good reconciliation for his honor's sake; but if he rejects this, there'll be some need of many and noble friends and all my great following."

"For this purpose all your brave friends ought to be of help then," said Styrmir.

24

Men then chose Bárð svarti and his son Aron to ride ahead with some other men to reconnoitre before the two groups met.

But the main force rode in a body down from Víðikjör, down over the ridge at Sandvatn; they discussed the maneuver at length, then moved on rather slowly. Þorgils rode in the forefront of his troop. Ingimund then recited this strophe:

14. Hall always means peace,
Hafliði, only defense
Of broad valley and booths
From men fully outlawed.
There rides to meet them
—Warrior now wise—
Spearpoint of his band,
Oddi's great son.[37]

Then the priest Þórð, called Lundarskalli, came riding up with some other men. He was a very wealthy man, a friend of Þorgils, and a man of importance and trust. He asked, though he already knew, what they had to discuss, how matters stood, and what was the latest report on Hafliði's forces. They told him exactly how Hafliði's troop had come into the upper plain and meant to defend by force the whole consecrated ground of the Þing, but that the bishop and many other men of good will had argued against an ambush and an encounter on horseback. They knew nothing further, so men were sent out to learn fresh news. Þórð said:

"I can't tell you what to do, Þorgils. But I do beg you to accept my invitation to come to my home. And as a result of your condescending to come, and an expression of my gratitude, I shall see that food alone is not the sole advantage you will gain by this visit. It is most likely that Hafliði will not maintain his ambush longer than one day or night, and then you will be able to ride on in peace. It may very well come about that good men will then bring about a reconciliation or a truce between you, after which it will be safe to ride on. This would free many men from those dangers which now look most likely for them."

When Þórð came to the end of his argument many men thanked him warmly for his advice and urged that it be followed.

25

Now it is time to tell about the expedition of Bárð and his son Aron; they reached Kluftir and down before Ármannsfel they saw a great company of horses and men; they considered what they should do, thinking it not unlikely that Hafliði and his men might be stationed there to guard both the routes, the one which runs from below Ármannsfel near Sleðaás, and the other which runs east across the lava below Hrafnabjörg below Reyðarmúli to Gjábakki and on east of the lava to the booths. Bárð and Aron decided to ride to meet these men, and Aron said:

"I don't know that we have any quarrels with any men, but some of our companions should ride along farther behind us and so observe how things go, then they can tell Þorgils if we run into any difficulties in our course. You mustn't be frightened, but you must make quite certain of the accuracy of whatever you report to Þorgils."

Bárð svarti and his son with some of their companions now rode out ahead to where the other host was stationed. The latter got to their feet with their weapons when the two men arrived and each was led aside. But the throng was in such movement that those who had remained behind Bárð and Aron could not, because of the crowd, see what the situation really was; they thought that the first two had been captured, and they did not long delay before riding briskly back to Þorgils. They told a very complicated story which could not be said to be lacking in event.

Þorgils said, "What have you to report?"

"We have no news to report for certain," they said, and then they told how Bárð and his companions were separated from them, "and there was a great host of men down before Sleðaás; Bárð and Aron rode up to them, and we thought we saw the men of the host jump up with their weapons and, at least, take them prisoner."

Þorgils said, "Do you think you know anything about which group it might be? Did you recognize any of the men or their equipment or their mounts?"

The messengers said, "We won't say for certain, but we thought that it might be Hafliði's group, and I thought that I recognized

Kinnskjóni, your favorite, whom you gave to your kinsman Böðvar in the summer before the Þing. Nor can I tell if the gold-inlaid spear which you gave him was there or not."

Many others gave their opinions then, commenting that this assuredly was news of great importance, and that it would obviously be better to accept Þórð's honorable invitation to his homestead than expose themselves and their followers to such mortal peril as to go into battle against such great odds, and show such arrogance as not to protect their honor; for there would be no danger in riding off in the morning or on the following day. And they repeated all that Þórð had suggested.

26

Þorgils listened while the others discussed matters in these terms but he added no comment and thought over the situation for himself. When others asked what decision he would adopt he said:

"If the facts are what men say, that the bravest and worthiest of our men have been taken captive and harmed, or maimed, or killed, then it will be shameful for us to ride off without getting more accurate information than we have. Then, again, these men thought they recognized two treasures, the horse and the spear, which I gave to my kinsman Böðvar and which he would not of his own will give up. If he has suffered injury I will ride on to see if I can avenge him.But if, as I expect, he has done so well that he is safe and sound and is himself in possession of his treasures, and furthermore has come to help us with a large force, then we will not be spoken of without shame if we ride away but leave him behind in danger. I mean therefore to ride on to the Þing, whatever is at stake, with any who are willing to follow me. Those who think it manlier to turn back are free to do so."

He set out at once, down through Sandkluftir; no one wanted to turn back when Þorgils rode forward, but they were all determined not to desert him, whatever the outcome.

Now it is time to tell of Bárð and Aron as they rode on towards the troop, where men stood up to meet them; they were greeted fairly, for they met with friends in the host. Böðvar Ásbjarnarson and Guðmund Þorgeirsson, a kinsman of Þorgils, were in the lead, and had a good hundred men with them. Each side had it firmly in mind to get news from the other. Böðvar asked Bárð about Þorgils' intentions, while Bárð asked Böðvar the news of the Þing. Men thronged in on all sides, for many wanted to hear what was reported. When they had talked with one another for a while, Bárð and his men rode farther, until they came down into the plain to Hafliði's company. They were well received there, for many knew the mission of Bárð and Aron, who were respected persons and friends with many honorable men. They were asked what they could report about Þorgils' movements or the size of his force. They reported that Þorgils had come to the heath south from Reykjardal with an immense company, that men had come to meet this company and declared riding to the Þing forbidden to Þorgils and his men, and that furthermore if Þorgils intended to ride in anyway, Hafliði then meant to defend the entire consecrated Þing against him. Þorgils replied that Hafliði could not have offered this idea in all seriousness. But they said he had indeed, and that he was advancing with twelve hundred men, according to their latest information. With this, Þorgils' company had come to a halt and were now discussing among themselves what decision to take—"And this was the way matters stood when we parted from them."

After that they rode back to their booths and went to meet with the bishop. The bishop greeted the father and son amicably, and they talked over in complete trust with one another the way the whole situation now stood. After this Bárð and Aron swiftly sent a report to Þorgils, letting him know about everything that had happened and all they had learned. The messengers sent by Bárð and Aron met Þorgils below Ármannsfel but above Sleðaás, where Böðvar and his men had made a halt. They told Þorgils all that had developed and reported that his booth was entirely destroyed, right down to the ground.

Böðvar said, "It is clear from this that Hafliði doesn't think much of the possibility of revenge at our hands, though it is also not improbable that he was trying to see if we could achieve anything more than rebuilding Þorgils' booth, for now our fingers are itching."

Then the men began to beat on their weapons. Many suggested in return that it would be best for Þorgils to make the decision about their action. Þorgils answered by reciting this:

15. He must not, great warrior,
Long fail of his oath
—That I say, goddess
Of ringing gold—to meet brave foes.[38]

"We will ride forward in spite of everything," said Þorgils, "and things must go as they will."

28

Again there are two things to tell:

When the bishop had called the priests to him, he went a second time to meet Hafliði and asked: "Are you still determined, Hafliði, to pay no attention to anyone's advice or desires about withdrawing your forces?"

"It looks as if that's the case," said Hafliði.

The bishop said: "Then we will go to the church, and by the power which God gave the Apostle Peter to bind and to loose the whole heaven and earth, and which he then gave to Pope Clement, following whom one after the other took up that power, which Archbishop Özur passed on to me—now with that power and authority I do here forbid you to remain here, to refuse reconciliation, and so destroy the peace. Messages have come to me from Þorgils' side that he is, for his part, willing to make an honorable offer. And," the bishop concluded, "for all these reasons together, if my words and our prayers count for anything in the sight of God, He will as readily grant your prayer on the Day of Judgment as you now grant mine."

Then Hafliði replied: "The quarrel between Þorgils and me

will come to whatever conclusion fate wills; anyone else can pass judgment on it even as he wishes. But against this word of yours I will not contend as long as the day lasts, if those men now present promise not to abandon my case before it has in some way come to an honorable conclusion."

"And that you be the one to arbitrate it," Hall Teitsson put in.[39]

The men agreed to this and Einar Gilsson then added, "Accept this sound advice, Hafliði, which the bishop offers, and after the holy day we will give you all the support we can."

Hafliði and his men then went back to their booths. But Þorgils and his men rode on to the plain and right up to their booth, where they saw the signs of the others' work where the booth was all broken apart. Many offered him their booths for shelter, but Þorgils refused these and wanted only to rebuild his own. Sæmund fróði came up then with some men and during that evening they all began to rebuild the booth; the whole task was finished before Matins.

Men now tried to effect a reconciliation between Hafliði and Þorgils, but Hafliði would accept no condition other than self-judgment. Þorgils did not refuse Hafliði as large a fine as he wished to demand, but he denied his right to make judgment involving all degrees of outlawry, and rights to goðorðs and estates. Throughout the holy day the negotiations continued as to whether Hafliði should arbitrate alone, without any reservations, and to the friends of both men this seemed a difficult matter to negotiate. But late in the evening of the day following the holy day, when most men had lain down to sleep, Ketil Þorsteinsson went with some others to Hafliði's booth, and was made welcome. Ketil said to Hafliði:

"It seems to your friends a great shame that no reconciliation is to be achieved and this case not brought to a good end: many think the case is hopeless now—or nearly so. I have no advice to give you but I have a fable to tell you:

29

"Two of us grew up in Eyjafjörð, and men said we were promising lads. I then got a chance, considered rather good fortune, to

marry Gróa the daughter of Bishop Gizur. But men hinted that she was not faithful to me. It made me unhappy that there should be such talk; a trial was held and all went well, but still the rumors which circulated made me very unhappy, and for this reason I grew very hostile toward the other man. One time when we met one another in public I attacked him but he ducked away from the blow and instead I fell beneath him. Then he drew his knife and stabbed me in the eye so that I lost the sight of that eye. But he—Guðmund Grímsson was his name—helped me to my feet. And there was something unusual about it even then, I thought—for I had twice his strength and thought I was his equal in every other respect.

"I wanted to avenge this at once with the help of my kinsmen, and to outlaw him; we prepared our case, but there were some influential men to support him in the lawsuit and so my case came to nothing. This may happen again and some men may appear to support Þorgils even though your case is more just.

"When my case had reached this point my adversary offered to pay a fine. I thought about what had happened to me and what great injury I had suffered and I refused his offer. Then I realized there was only one salvation, to appeal the case to the mercy of God, for hitherto I had been unsuccessful whenever the outcome depended on my judgment. I told myself that my indignation was the fault of the Möðruvellings' pride and arrogance. Then I discovered that whenever I thought deeply about my honor no offer could be made which I would find honorable. So for the sake of God I decided to submit the whole case to Him. I knew that then I would get the reward which would be most beneficial to me. And I invited him into my home and he was with me for a long time afterwards.

"At once then rumors and judgments by other people veered about, and every event hereafter turned to good fortune and esteem for me, more than before. And I expect that, under God, you too will fare well.

"And now," said Ketil, "take what seems to be useful to you from my fable."

30

Hafliði thanked him warmly and replied:

"A question of great importance which we have been discussing here at the Þing is whom we North Quarter men should choose as bishop to replace Bishop Jón. Most men have handed the choice over to me. But because of this lawsuit the issue has not been quickly settled. Now, however, there is no need to reflect any longer about the choice; for even if men debate it all summer long I shall accept no other decision than that you be our bishop. This is my conviction: the people's interest will best be served if the choice is, as at present, that you become bishop."

Hafliði was much affected by their conversation; from then onward he was more disposed to a reconciliation than he had been before, and was much humbler. Ketil said:

"I am unworthy of such a position. Everyone can see what great faults I have in the eyes of mankind. But far greater are my faults in the eyes of God, so that I am unfitted for episcopal dignity."

But finally Ketil said: "If it would bring your reconciliation closer than hitherto, then I would not refuse this offer if other men wish it as much as you do."

31

After this incident they tried yet again to effect a reconciliation with the efforts of wise and benevolent men, but Hall was in every way harder to persuade than Hafliði. Still, they managed to achieve a reconciliation, on condition that Hafliði should determine as large a fine as he wished for his injuries, excluding all degrees of outlawry, goðorðs, and homesteads, as had been stipulated from the first. Then each of the three men who gave surety took the Fifth Court Oath[40] to pay such fines as were adjudged. These men gave surety: Þorstein Gellisson from Fróðá, a wealthy man and a kinsman of Þorgils (he was married to Steinvör, the daughter of Þorstein Arason); second, Styrmir Hreinsson of Gilsbakki,a kinsman of Þorgils (Þuríð, the daughter of Þorgeir Galtason, was the mother of Styrmir, while Styrmir Þorgeirsson

was the father of Hall Kolfinna's father); third, Þorstein ranglát—as far as I remember.

And when this case was ended, the following strophes were composed:

16. Grain-of-Sand, still
Irritated both sides
To reach an agreement,
A pearl of peace.
Though better, he said—
That gold-gracious warrior—
Exhorting his kinsmen,
Men should move into battle.

17. Grain-of-Sand still
Irritated his kinsmen
To reach an agreement,
The pearl of peace.
Now better, he said,
Men go home in all haste—
That ring-giving warrior,
Who chafed at all settlement.[41]

During the negotiations, when the men were discussing the reconciliation, it became apparent that Hall thought there was no need to draw a very large company together unless Hafliði might use it for his own convenience—if obliged to, either in order to arbitrate alone or unconditionally. He said that Hafliði had pulled in enough money in his old age, if he could only hold on to his honor.

The third day before the Þing adjourned, men from both sides went forward in great numbers when the reconciliation was to be proclaimed. Hafliði stipulated eighty hundreds and three alna in aurar for his wounds, valid if paid in land in the North Quarter; gold and silver; Norwegian wares; ironwork; sterling treasures which were worth not less than one cow-gild;[42] and geldings—one stallion would be acceptable, if a mare followed him, or a mare whom a stallion followed; but no horse older than twelve years or younger than three; the payment was to be brought to the

doorway of Hafliði's booth, or the goods brought to his homestead, and Hafliði himself was to appraise the entire payment.

When Hafliði pronounced the extent of the payments Skafti Þórarinsson responded with this: "If each of Hafliði's limbs cost this much, all of him would be pretty dear!"

Hafliði retorted: "My tongue could not then prosecute the case if such compensation were necessary. It would be more to the liking of Böðvar Ásbjarnarson and others of our enemies if I accepted fines for what has been done to me than try to get revenge. But I have agreed to a reconciliation more at the entreaties of my friends than from a desire for money alone."

Böðvar said: "Since these remarks are aimed at me more than at others I will reply, and I protest this; for although I agree that you suffered this much indignity, or even more, I do not agree about the size of the fine."

When Hafliði had proclaimed the terms of the reconciliation, Böðvar said: "There's a good catch on the hook!"

Because of all these comments which Hafliði had aimed at Böðvar, lasting hostility arose between them.

Þorgils said: "Men should listen in peace to Hafliði's words, for each of us here has what might content him well."

32

And after that each of them thanked his supporters warmly for their help, company, and honor. Before Þorgils came home from the Þing he had received from his friends and kinsmen no less than eighty hundreds; also, many men throughout the whole countryside had invited him to their homesteads, north and south, east and west, men whom he later entertained, and they gave him at parting honorable gifts. He collected money widely throughout the West Fjords Quarter. When all the fine which had been stipulated was paid, Þorgils gave Hafliði honorable gifts, five studhorses together with a gold finger-ring and a sheepskin cloak given him by Sigríð, the daughter of Eyjólf, the son of Snorri goði from Höfðabrekka in the east, who had married Jón Kálfsson.

(Þorgils had gone there on a visit and at that time she had given him these treasures.)

Hafliði then said: "Now I see that you mean to honor our agreement, and from now on we will be more on our guard against quarreling."

And they fulfilled that sentence, for as long as they lived they were always of one mind in important cases.

The Genealogical Tables

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1

Sæmund fróði married Guðrún (the daughter of Kolbein Flosason) and their children were Eyjólf the priest, Loft the priest, Loðmund, and Þórey, who married Þorvarð Óláfsson. (Their son was Óláf the priest.)

Loft Sæmundarson made a voyage to Norway where he married Þóra—and as events turned out, she later proved to be the daughter of a Norwegian king, Magnús berfætt. Their son, Jón, was the most powerful and most popular chieftain that ever lived in Iceland. He married Halldóra (the daughter of Skegg-Brand) and their children were Sæmund and Solveig, who married Guðmund gríss. Jón had two children by Ragnheið (the daughter of Þórhall and the sister of Bishop Saint Þorlák), viz., Bishop Pál and Orm Breiðbæling. Jón Loftsson also had a son by Æsa (the daughter of Þorgeir); his name was Þorstein and his sons were called Andréas, Ámundi, Þorgeir, and Gunnar. Einar was yet another son of Jón Loftsson, by Helga (the daughter of Þórir), and he had many children: Svart, Hrafn, and Kriströð. Also by Valgerð (the daughter of Loft), Jón Loftsson had two sons, Hallbjörn the priest and Sigurð, who married Salgerð (the daughter of Erlend).

Loðmund Sæmundarson married Þórun (the daughter of Þórarin Fornason)—their son was Jón, who married Aldís (the daughter of Halldór) and *their* children were Valgerð and Eyjólf. Guðlaug was the son of Eyjólf by Valgerð (the daughter of Gamla), but Eyjólf had the following children by Hilda (the daughter of Skeggi Skútuson): Jón, Loðmund, and Álfheið. Ragnhild and Solveig were the daughters of Valgerð and Sæmund Jónsson.

Þórð, the son of Gil Snorrason and grandson of Jörund, was a contemporary of Bishop Gizur. Gil's mother was Ásný (the daughter of Sturla Þjóðreksson) and Þórð's mother was Þórdís (the daughter of Guðlaug); and her mother was Þorkatla (the daughterof Halldór, the son of Snorri goði). Þórð Gilsson married Vigdís (the daughter of Sverting Grímsson), whose mother was Þórdís (the daughter of Guðmund Guðmundarson, the son of Eyjólf halti, the son of Guðmund ríki). Sturla was the eldest son of Þorð and Vigdís, Snorri was the second son, and the daughters were Þórdís and Guðrún.

Sturla first lived with Álof (the daughter of Vilhjálm[1]),—their their children were Svein, Þuríð, Helga, Valgerð, and Sigríð. Later, Sturla married Ingibjörg (the daughter of Þorgeir Hallason): one of their daughters was Steinun, who married Jón Brandsson, and their sons were Bergþór, Ívar, Brand, and Ingimund; another daughter, Þórdís, married Bárð, the son of Snorri who was the son of Bárð svart—their sons were Péter, Sturla, and Snorri.

Björn was the name of a son that Sturla had by Guðfinna. Later, Sturla married Guðný (the daughter of Böðvar Þórðarson). Böðvar's mother was Valgerð (the daughter of Markús the Lawspeaker[2]), and his wife was Helga (the daughter of Þórð Magnússon from Reykjaholt). The children of Sturla and Guðný were Þórð, Sighvat, Snorri, Helga (who married the Norwegian Sölmund) and Vigdís (who married Gelli Þorsteinsson).

Þórð Sturluson first married Helga (the daughter of Ari sterki) and they had no children. Later, he married Guðrún (the daughter of Bjarni Bjarnarson); their son was Böðvar and their daughter, Halli, who married the priest, Tómas Þórarinson. Þórð also had a concubine called Þóra and their children were Óláf, Sturla, Guttorm, Þórð, Valgerð, and Guðrún.

Sighvat Sturluson married Halldóra (the daughter of Tumi) and their children were Tumi, Sturla, Kolbein, Þórð kakali, Markús, Þórð krók, Tumi, and Steinvör, who married Hálfdan Sæmundarson. Valgerð, another daughter of Sighvat, married

Bárð Þorkelsson. He also had a daughter, Sigríð, by Helga (the daughter of Bjarni) and she married Styrmi Þórisson.

Snorri Sturluson married Herdís (the daughter of Bersi)—their children were Jón murt and Hallbera, who married Kolbein Arnórsson. Later, Snorri married Hallveiga (the daughter of Orm Jónsson), but none of their children lived. Snorri had a son called Órækja by Þuríð (the daughter of Hall), and by Guðrún (the daughter of Hrein) a daughter called Ingibjörg who married Gizur Þorvaldsson. He had another daughter by Oddný; she was called Þórdís and was married to Þorvald the Vatnsfirðing.

3

Ásbjörn Arnórsson married Ingun (the daughter of Þorstein, the son of Snorri goði), and their children were Arnór, Þorstein, Böðvar, and Sigríð.

Arnór married Guðrún (the daughter of Dadi Starkaðarson) and their son was Kolbein, whose illigitimate son was Tumi.

Tumi first married Guðrún (the daughter of Þórir Steinmóðarson(and their daughter was Sigríd, who married Sigurð Ormsson. Later, Tumi married Þuríð (the daughter of Gizur) and their children were Kolbein, Arnór, Halldóra (who married Sighvat Sturluson), and Álfheið (who married Ingimund Grímsson). Tumi had an illegitimate son, Þorstein, who was the father of Ívar the monk, Tumi, Guðrún (who lived with Sveinbjörn Hrafnsson), Steinun (who lived with Krák), and Sigríð. Tumi's illegitimate daughter, Arndís, married Steingrím Þorvaldsson. Arnór Tumason married Ásdís (the daughter of Sigmund) and their children were Kolbein ungi, Sigríð (who married Böðvar from Stað), Herdís (who married Böðvar from Bær), and Arnbjörg (who married Órækja Snorrason). Arnór's illegitimate daughter Þjóðbjörg, married Broddi.

Kolbein, the son of Arnór Ásbjarnarson, married Herdís (the daughter of Þorkel Steinólfsson) and their son was Arnór, who married Guðrún (the daughter of Bishop Brand[3]), and their son was Kolbein kaldaljós and their daughter, Halldóra, who married Jón Sigmundarson. Their son was Bishop Brand II.[4] Kolbein

kaldaljós married Margrét (the daughter of Sæmund Jónsson)—their children were Brand, Pál, and Valgerð.

4

Sigmund Þorgilsson married Halldóra (the daughter of Skeggi Bjarnarson) and their son was Jón who married Þorný (the daughter of Gil Einarsson); their son was Orm, who married Helga (the daughter of Árni Grímsson). The son of Orm and Helga was Sigmund, who married Arnbjörg (the daughter of Odd Gizurarson); their son was Jón, who married Þóra (the daughter of Guðmund gríss); their children were Orm Svínfelling, Steinun, and Solveig. Later, Jón married Halldóra (the daughter of Arnór) and their son was Bishop Brand. Jón's illegitimate son, Þórarin, married Helga (the daughter of Dig-Helgi) and they had two sons, Þorvarð and Odd.

Sigurð the monk was another son of Orm [Jónsson], a brother of Sigmund. He later married Þuríd (the daughter of Gizur) but his first wife was Sigríð (the daughter of Tumi).

Orm Svínfelling married Álfheið (the daughter of Njál); their children were Sæmund, Guðmund, Orm, and Þóra, who married Krák Tomasson. Oddný, an illegitimate daughter of Orm, married Finnbjörn.

The mother of Skarð-Snorri was called Guðrún, and her mother was Halldóra (the daughter of Jón Sigmundarson, the son of Þorgils, the son of Þorgeir, the son of Þórð Freysgoði).

5

Bárð svarti was a distinguished bóndi who lived in Selárdal adn he was the son of Atli. Bárð married Birna (the daughter of Aron Snorrason); their children were Sveinbjörn, Atli, Aron, Snorri, Ingólf, Styrbjörn, Gunnar, Höskuld, Rögnvald, Markús, Hallbera, Oddgerð, Salgerð, and Úlfrún.

Sveinbjörn married Steinun (thet daughter of Þórð Oddleifsson) and their son was Hrafn, who married Hallkatla (the daughter of Einar)—Sveinbjörn, Krák, Einar, Grím, Steinun, Herdís, Þórey, Þuríð, and Hallgerð were their children. The priest Markús

sterki was Sveinbjörn's son and his daughters were Herdís (who married Hall Gizurarson), Helga[5] (who married Brand[6]), Guðrún (who married Sám Símonarson), Birna, and Halla.

Aron Bárðarson married Sigríð (the daughter of Þorleik and teh sister of Þorleif beiskaldi from Hítardal),—their children were Hafþór, Yngvild, and Ragnheið (who married Ámund); their children were Þórð, Tófa, Margrét, Hallbera, Birna. Ragnheið later married Þórarin Þorkelsson; their children were Krák, Halldór, Eyvind, and Tómas, who married Halla (the daughter of Þórð Sturluson); their children were Krák, Þórarin, Auðun, Snört, Guðrún, Ragnheið, Guðfinna, Guðrí , and Hallbera. Guðfinna (the daughter of Þórarin) was married to Skúli from Hraun.

Snorri Bárðarson married Sesilía (the daughter of Ásgeir) and their son was Bárð, who married Þórdís (the daughter of Sturla). Later, Snorri married Sesilía (the daughter of Hafþór) and their daughters were Þorlaug and Ursula, who married Svein Sturluson. Snorri also had two illegitimate children: Eilíf and Tófa (whose mother, Sæun, was married to Skarð-Snorri).

6

Þórð from Vatnsfjörð was the son of Þorvald Kjartansson and Þórdís (the daughter of Hermund). Þorvald's mother was Guðrún (the daughter of Halldór, the son of Snorri goði). Þórð married Sigríð (the daughter of Hafliði Másson) and their sons were Pál, Snorri, Teit, and Ívar.

Pál married Guðrún (the daughter of Bishop Brand). Pál had these children by Hallveig (the daughter of Ásmund): Vigfús and Oddný, who had these children by Kálf Snorrason from Mel: Vigfús, Snorri, and Eirný, who lived with Þorð Jórundarson at Hítarnes. Oddný had the following children by Þorbjörn Bergsson: Snorri, Teit, Valgerð, and Margrét, who married Ásgrím Bergþorsson.

Snorri was the father of Hafliði who was shipwrecked with Ásmund kastanrassi. Snorri was also the father of Þorvald, Þórð, and Bárð. Þorvald's mother was Joreið (the daughter of Oddleif,

the son of Þórð, the son of Þorvald, the son of Þórð, the son of Þorkel auðgi from Alviðrá). Þorvald married Kolfinna (the daughter of Einar Þorgilsson); their children were Einar (who was drowned in Ísafjörð), Jóreið (who married Hafþór Halldórsson), and Halldóra (who married Eyjólf Eyjólfsson). Þórð was another son of Þorvald, by Helga (the daughter of Orm). Snorri was another of his sons. Illugi was Þorvald's son by Þórðís (the daughter of Ásgeir) and Ketil was his son by Lofnheið. Pál was another of his sons, by Halldóra (the daughter of Svein Helgason). Later, Þorvald married Þórðís (the daughter of Snorri Sturluson), and their children were Einar and Kolfinna.

7

Þorstein, nicknamed ranglát, lived at Grund in Eyjafjörð. He was the son of Einar, the son of Ketil, the son of Þorvald krók, the son of Þórir from Espihól, the son of Hámund heljarskin. Þorstein's mother was Steinun (the daughter of Berg, the son of Vigfús, the son of Víga-Glúm). These were the children of Þorstein's mother was Steinun (the daughter of Berg, the son who married Álfheið (the daughter of Þorleif beiskaldi, the son of Þorleik auðgi from Hítardal); these are their children: Þorleik, Árni, Herdís, and these are Ketil's illegitimate children: Jón and Þórdís. These are the children of Þorleik Ketilsson and Guðlaug (the daughter of Eyjólf, the son of Guðmund gassimað, the son of Þorstein, the son of Eyjólf halti): the Lawspeaker Ketil the priest, Steinun, and Ingun; and these were illegitimate: Þóra and Þorbjörg.

Björn was the son of Þorstein ranglát; Þorstein's other children were Óláf, Einar, Guðrún, Steinun, and Helga.

The children of Óláf Þorsteinsson: Einar and Guðrún; the child of Gúðrún and Eyjólf Hallsson: Jón from Möðrufel.

Björn Þorsteinsson married Ingibjörg (the daughter of Þorleif beiskaldi); their son was Sæbjörn.

The daughters of Guðrún (Þorstein's daughter) and Jórund Gunnarsson: Halla, Kolfinna, Hallfríð, and Hallótta. Halla's children were: Flosi, Einar, Guðrún, Helga, and Guðrún. Kolfinna's

children: Jón and Kár. Jón's children: Þorstein from Hvamm, Guðrún, and Einar. Hallótta's children: Styrmir, Steinun, and Þuríð.

The children of Steinun (Þorstein's daughter): Vilmund, Þorstein, and Hafliði.

The children of Helga (Þorstein's daughter) and Ásgrím Þorðarson: Hafliði, Þuríð, and Halldóra.

The mother of Ketil the priest (Þorleik's son) was Guðlaug (the daughter of Eyjólf, the son of Guðmund gassimað, the son of Þorstein, the son of Eyjólf halti, the son of Guðmund ríki, the son of Eyjólf, the son of Einar, the son of Auðun rotinn, an original settler. The mother of Eyjólf Einarsson was Valgerð; her mother was Vilborg (the daughter of Ósvald), her mother was Úlfrún, the daughter of the English King Játmund.[7] The mother of Guðlaug was Sigríd (the daughter of Hall, the son of Lawspeaker Hrafn, the son of Lawspeaker Úlfheðin, the son of Lawspeaker Gunnar.[8] But the mother of Sigríð was Valgerð (the daughter of Þorstein, the son of Ásbjörn, the son of Arnór, the son of Arngeir, the son of Spak-Böðvar, the son of Öndott krák).

The Tale of the Men of Haukadal

The Tale of the Men of Haukadal

1

The famous Norwegian Ketilbjörn Ketilsson sailed to Iceland when it had been settled extensively only along the coast. His mother was Æsa, the daughter of Grjótgarð and a sister of Hákon Hlaðajarl. Ketilbjörn had married Helga, the daughter of Þórð Hrappson skeggi, and he spent the first winter with Þórð below Bláskógaheið and then, in the spring, he set off to look for a settlement inland. (This is what Teit said.[1]) They constructed a hut on the spot where they spent their first night and this place was called Skálabrekka. They hadn't traveled very far from this hut when they encountered a frozen river; as they hacked a water-hole in the ice, an axe fell into the water, and for this reason the river was named Öxará. Subsequently this river was diverted into Almannagjá and now flows along Þingvellir.[2] After this Ketilbjörn continued on his search until he reached the place now called Reyðarmúli.[3] There they left behind some trout that they had with them, and named the place after the trout. Ketilbjörn settled and built his house under Mosfel and claimed all the surrounding land for himself for as far as he wished.

The Mosfel-family are descended from Ketilbjörn and Helga. Their son was Teit, the father of Gizur hvíti and of Jórun, the mother of Ásgrím Elliða-Grímsson and of Sigfús, who was the father of Þorgerð of Oddi, the mother of both Grím and of Sigfús, who was the father of the priest Sæmund fróði. Teit had many other children not included here.

Gizur hvíti was the father of Bishop Ísleif, about whom a great deal is written in the Saga of St. Óláf,[4] especially the story of his visit here to Iceland to preach Christianity along with Hjalti Skeggjason from Þjórsárdal.

2

Ísleif was consecrated bishop in the days of Harald Sigurðarson.[5] When the Icelandic chieftains realized that Bishop Ísleif was so much more honorable and scholarly than the other teachers in Iceland, they allowed their sons to be instructed by him and, subsequently, to be ordained as priests. Two of these men were later consecrated as bishops—Kol who was in east Vík[6] and Jón who was later the Bishop of Hólar.[7] Ísleif was fifty when he was consecrated as bishop, at the time when Leo IX was Pope,[8] and he spent the winter following his consecration in Norway and then sailed to Iceland. He died in Skálaholt, when he had been bishop for twenty-four years, on the Sunday six days after the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, eighty years after the death of King Óláf Tryggvason.

3

Gizur, the son of Bishop Ísleif, was consecrated as bishop in the days of King Óláf kyrr[9] at the request of the Icelandic inhabitants, two years after the death of Bishop Ísleif. He was the second Icelandic Bishop, as he had previously been the second Bishop of Gautland, but there his name had been altered and was called "Gisröðr." (This is what Ari the priest has said.)

Bishop Gizur was held in higher regard than any other Icelander by all the people. Because of his popularity, and with the assistance of the eloquence of Sæmund the priest and the skillful management of Lawspeaker Markús—and of many other wise men—it was written into the law that all Icelandic men, except those who were exempt, should take a census and a valuation of their property and then swear to its true value, whether it were in land or in cash, and, thereafter, to pay a tithe of that value. This was a remarkable tribute to his command of the people's obedience, inasmuch as he was able to have all the wealth in this country valued on oath, as well as the land itself, and then to have a tithe of that paid—because it was written into the law—as long as Iceland should be inhabited.

Bishop Gizur also had it laid down by law that the Bishop's see in Iceland should be at Skálaholt: he contributed to the establishment of this see both Skálaholtsland and other forms of wealth in lands and in money. But when he considered that the see was adequately endowed with wealth and emoluments, then he contributed more than a quarter of his diocese towards the cost of establishing an additional episcopal seat in Iceland. Previously he had made a census of all the bóndis in Iceland which showed that there were 840 in the East Fjords Quarter, 1,200 in the Rangæinga Quarter, 1,080 in the Breiðafjörð Quarter, and 1,440 in the Eyjafjörð Quarter. These numbers did not include those men who were not obliged to contribute towards the Þing-ride tax.[10]

Úlfheðin Gunnarsson became Lawspeaker after Markús and held the office for nine summers; and Bergþór followed him for six summers.[11] During the first summer of Bergþor's tenure of the office, Bishop Gizur was unable to attend the Alþing [because of ill health]. However, he sent a message to his friends at the Alþing asking them to request Þorlák Runólfsson[12] [Þorleiksson], the brother of Hall from Haukadal, that he should consent to being consecrated as bishop. As soon as the message arrived, this request was unanimously agreed to. Þorlák then sailed for Norway that same summer and returned the following summer when he had been consecrated bishop.

Gizur was forty when he was consecrated as bishop, while Gregory VII was Pope. He then spent the next winter in Denmark and sailed for Iceland in the following summer. When he had been a bishop for twenty-four years, like his father, then Jón was consecrated as bishop and he was then over fifty-four. Twelve years after this, when Gizur had been a bishop for thirty-six years in all, Þorlák was consecrated as Bishop of Skálaholt in Bishop Gizur's lifetime. Bishop Gizur died at Skálaholt. In the spring of the year of his death, the following men also died: Pope Pascal; King Baldwin of Jerusalem; Arnald, Patriarch of Jerusalem; King Philip of Sweden, and King Alexius of Greece. This was one hundred and eighteen years after the death of

Óláf Tryggvason and two hundred and fifty years after Ingólf the Settler had first arrived in Iceland.[13]

4

Bishop Ísleif had three sons and they were all chieftains: Bishop Gizur, and Þorvald, and a third son called Teit. He was reared at Haukadal with Hall mildi.[14] I[15] came to stay with Teit when I was seven years old, the winter after Gelli Þorkelsson died. Now Hall told the priest Ari fróði that he could remember being baptized when he was only three years old. This was in the winter before Christianity was made the official legal religion in Iceland. He had set up his own establishment when he was thirty and had lived at Haukadal for sixty-four years. He was ninety-four when he died on the Feast of St. Martin, ten years after the death of Bishop Ísleif. Teit the priest, Hall's foster son and the true son of Bishop Ísleif, lived at Haukadal after Hall's day, and he was a man of great distinction. Many men are descended from him and they are known as the Haukadal-family. He died in 1101, five years before Hvamm-Sturla was born. Teit's son, Bishop-elect Hall, was also a powerful chieftain; he lived at Haukadal after his father's day, and he died in the year 1150.

Hall Teitsson married Þuríð, the daughter of Þorgeir from Mýr. Their son was Gizur the Lawspeaker,[16] who also lived at Haukadal after his father's time. He was both wise and eloquent and acted as Chief Marshal to King Sigurð, the father of King Sverri.[17] He was the best scholar who had ever lived in Iceland. He often made journeys away from Iceland and was more highly regarded in Rome than any previous Icelander both for his skill and prowess. He had a wide knowledge of Saxony and Germany and he wrote a book about them which is called *Flos peregrinationis*.[18]

He married Álfheið, the daughter of Þorvald auðgi Guðmundarson and their children were Þorvald, Abbot Hall, Bishop Magnús, Þuríð (who married Tumi Kolbeinsson), and Kolfinna, who first married Ari sterki and then Garða-Snorri. Gizur had a third daughter by Þuríð (the daughter of Árni) and she married Bersi Halldórsson and had two children by him, Bishop-elect Teit[19]

and Þorgerð. Gizur had a fourth daughter by Þorbjörg (the daughter of Hrein); her name was Vilborg and she married Teit Súgandason. Gizur also had two daughters by Þorný (the daughter of Vigfús): Valgerð, who married Teit Áslákssón, and Þórdís, who married Þorstein Jónsson. Gizur's son Abbot Hall married Herdís (the daughter of Sveinbjörn) and their daughter was called Hallfríð; Hall's illegitimate son was called Magnús and he married Steinvör (the daughter of Sám) and their son also was called Sám. Gizur's third son, Bishop Magnús, married Halldóra (the daughter of Hjalti) and their sons were called Hjalti and Gizur. Þorvald, the eldest son of Gizur the Lawspeaker, lived at Hruni and married Jóra (the daughter of Bishop Klæng).[20] They had five sons, Guðmund, Klæng, Björn, Einar, and Teit.

5

At this time Guðmund gríss, who had married Solveig (the daughter of Jón Loptsson), lived at Þingvellir. They had two daughters, both named Þóra, and, in order to distinguish between them, they were called "the Younger" and "the Elder." Being exceedingly skillful and highly cultured young ladies, the two Þóras were considered the most desirable matches of all the unmarried women. They always took their linen to be washed in the river that flowed into Almannagjá.

One day, as they were enjoying themselves by the river, Þóra the Elder made a speech:

"Sister, how long do you think it will be before some men will ask for our hands in marriage? What do you think the future really holds for us two?"

"I have never given the matter much thought," said the younger Þóra, "because I am very happy with things as they are."

"I agree," said the Elder, "that this is an honorable and highly respected life here at home with Father and Mother, but things are not really as gay or as cheerful as they might be."

"That's true enough," said the younger Þóra, "but I doubt whether you would like it better if you suddenly changed your way of life."

"Just for the fun of it," said Þóra the Elder, "let us see if we can try to tell our own fortunes. Tell me. What man would you prefer to come and ask for your hand? For, believe me, we will never be allowed to stay unmarried at home for ever."

"I see no point in discussing this," said the younger Þóra, "because this has probably been decided for us already and, even if we were to guess or gossip about it, that cannot alter their decision one bit."

"I, too, agree with the old proverb," said the elder sister, "that nothing is less significant than the fate of men, but even so I would like you at least to tell me whom you would choose, if you had the chance."

The younger Þóra then said: "Please listen to me and drop this subject, because least said is soonest mended."

"I am not really concerned about any significant outcome of our chat," said Þóra the Elder. "Come on! I'll tell you first the man I'd choose and then you can tell me your choice."

The younger one said: "You are the elder, and because you were bound to have the first say, you have refused to abandon this idle gossip."

"Agreed," said the elder Þóra; "I would like to see Jón Sigmundarson come riding to our home and asking for my hand, and gaining it."

The younger Þóra then said: "I can see that you have decided to make sure that the most eligible bachelor comes your way and that is why you wished to choose first, in order to pick the best man. What I would like is more difficult and more unlikely. It is my wish that Jóra, the Bishop's daughter, would die and that Þorvald Gizurarson would come and ask for my hand."

"We had better discontinue this conversation and say no more," said her elder sister and immediately they set off for home.

Now the ten-year period was over which Archbishop Guttorm had allowed for Þorvald and Jóra to live together,[21] and still Þorvald said that his love for her was greater than ever before, nor could he really see how he could agree to separate from her according to the promise he made to the Archbishop. But Jóra died that same winter.

The following spring both Þorvald and Jón paid visits west to Borgarfjörð. They rode together and stayed at Þingvellir. One morning, as they rode westwards, they talked a great deal about Guðmund's daughters. The sisters slept in the same bed and the elder Þóra always slept next to the wall. When they returned from the west Þorvald and Jón stayed once more at Þingvellir. And then the elder Þóra said to her sister:

"Tonight I will arrange things so that Þorvald and Jón be allowed to sleep in our bed. And if they should ask for our hands this time, then I will take the man who slept on my side of the bed and you shall have the one who sleeps next to the partition."

She had found out that Þorvald always slept next to the wall and, of the two, this was the man she really preferred.

The younger Þóra replied: "Why should you try to fix things, no matter how you change beds? We can't alter the fate that has already been decided for us."

That night, as the two men retired to bed, Jón said: "My dear Þorvald, which side do you prefer, the wall or the partition?"

Þorvald said, "Usually I sleep next to the wall, but I'll leave it to you."

"Then I'll sleep by the wall," said Jón.

And this is what they did. The next morning they asked for the daughters in marriage with the result that Þóra the Elder was given to Jón and her younger sister to Þorvald.

These were the children of Þorvald and Þóra the Younger: Halldóra was the eldest, then Gizur jarl, and then Kolfinna. Halldóra married the Lawspeaker and priest Ketil Þorláksson.[22]

The Saga of Guðmund Arason the Priest

The Saga of Guðmund Arason the Priest

1

Þorgeir Hallason lived at Hvassafel in Eyjafjörð and married Hallbera the daughter of Einar from Reykjanes, who was the son of Ari, the great-grandson of Má. Ten of the children of Þorgeir and Hallbera survived infancy, five sons and five daughters. One of the sons was called Einar and he left no descendants. He lost his life in the wastelands of Greenland and there are two versions of his death. According to the account given by Styrkár Sigmundsson—who came from Greenland and was renowned as a reliable historian—their ship was later found in the wilds of Greenland but the crew had divided into two factions and fought each other when one party had used up all its provisions. Einar escaped with two companions in search of the settlements; he climbed among the glaciers and died there within a day's journey of the settlement, and his body was found a few winters later; it was intact and uncorrupted and is now buried on Herjólfsnes.[1]

Þorvarð was another son of Þorgeir and Hallbera and at eighteen he sailed to Norway. As soon as he set foot on land in Bergen, he attacked Jón, a courtier of King Ingi, so that he never recovered and died later that winter. The reason for the attack was this: Jón had sailed out of Eyjafjörð and without Þorvarð, who immediately found a berth on another ship that got into Bergen only three days after Jón. As soon as he had attacked Jón, Þorvarð went to find Ketil Kálfsson, with the shivered axe head in one hand and the shaft in the other. The final outcome of the incident was that Þorvarð gained in reputation and became a member of the court of King Ingi.

The various exploits of Þorvarð are too numerous and far-ranging to be included in this saga and will not be recounted here. When his travels were over he married Herdís the daughter of Sighvat, by whom he had five daughters who survived childhood: one was Guðný who first married Þorgeir, the son of Bishop Brand, and subsequently married Eirík Hákonarson from the Orkneys, the nephew of Sigurð slembi; another daughter was Gyðríð, who married Kolbein Tumason; the third was Guðrún, wife to Klæng Kleppjárnsson; a fourth, Hallbera, married Þórð Önundarson; and the fifth was Ingibjörg, the wife of Brand.[2]

Before his marriage to Herdís, Þorvarð had one daughter by Yngvild, the daughter of Þorgils Oddason, and she was married to Hjálm Ásbjarnarson, and a second daughter (Helga) by Herdís, the daughter of Klæng, and she was married to Teit Oddsson from the East Fjords. Another child of his (by a woman called Helga), was Ögmund who married Sigríð, the daughter of Eldjárn of Espihól. In his old age Þorvarð had yet another daughter, Berghild, by Birna, the daughter of Brand, and she married Eldjárn who lived in the district of Fljótsdal. The third son of Þorgeir Hallason was Þórð who became a monk at Þverá and died there, childless. A fourth son was Ingimund who married Sigríð, the daughter of Tumi, without any issue. He was a priest and a man of distinction. The fifth son of Þorgeir was Ari, a powerful, well-made man.

Þorgeir's first daughter was Þóra, who first married Heðin Eilífsson, who lived at Hólar in Eyjafjörð, and then married Eyjólf Einarsson. A second daughter was Ingibjörg, who first married Helgi Eiríksson of Langahlíð and then Hvamm-Sturla. Þorgeir's third daughter was called Þorný, the wife of Grím Snorrason from Hof in Skagafjörð. His fourth daughter, Gríma, married Brand Tjörvason of Víðivellir and his fifth daughter, Oddný, was the wife of Darr-Þórir Þorvarðsson.

There was a man called Gunnar who was known as Sleggju-Gunnar; he was the son of Helgi, the son of Þórð, the son of Þórir, the son of Arngeir, the son of Böðvar. Gunnar was married to Rannveig, the daughter of Úlfheðin, the son of Kolli, the son of Þormóð, the son of Kolli, the son of Þorlák, who was the

brother of Steinþór of Eyr, from whom the men who live at Eyr claim descent. (Þormóð Kollason had married Þorný, the daughter of Ari of Reykjanes.) Gunnar and Rannveig had married off their daughter, Úlfheið, against her will and subsequently Ari, the fifth son of Þorgeir, became her lover and she bore him four children. Their first son, called Klemet, died young but their second son, Guðmund, was born at the farm called Grjótá in Hörgárdal which was then owned by Steinun, the daughter of Þorstein and Sigríð (the daughter of Úlfheðin). On her mother's side Steinun was a cousin to Úlfheið and they were very fond of each other. The child was born three nights after Michaelmas,[3] and there was an old, wise man at the farm, called Guðmund kárhöfði. He declared, when the newly born baby cried, that he had never heard such a child's voice before and he prophesied that, if it lived, that child would prove to be outstanding among other men, so great had been his awe when he heard it cry.

Ari and Úlfheið had two other children: a daughter Guðrún and a son, Gunnar, who died young.

When they first set up house together, Úlfheið had given Ari fifteen hundred standard marks for the household expenses and his own use, but she retained her gold ring and many other precious possessions. Ari was so extravagant and big-minded that the money was quickly spent.

2

We must now return to Þorvarð Þorgeirsson. After the death of King Ingi[4] he returned to Iceland and made it known that he would never serve any other earthly king than King Ingi who, so Þorvarð believed, had no equal. He also urged his brother Ari not to ally himself with the party that had caused King Ingi's death—if ever he should go to Norway. He warned Ari that a group of supporters would inevitably band together in Vík (in Eastern Norway) to avenge the king and he suggested that Ari should act as his substitute and join that party.

Ari sailed for Norway leaving Úlfheið behind in Iceland with Guðmund, their son. In Norway, Ari contrived a meeting with

Earl Erling[5] in the Vík the following spring and joined his army immediately before the battle at Tunsberg[6] where Erling jarl defeated Hákon herðibreið and put him to flight. There soon followed a second battle, near Hrafnabjörg, where Hákon again retreated. The same summer, at a third battle below Sekk in Raumsdal, King Hákon was killed along with many of his leading men.[7] Erling jarl rewarded Ari's faithful support with many honorable marks of favor.

During that winter, the jarl and King Magnús journeyed to Upplönd, with Ari and numerous members of the court, and they fought a battle against Earl Sigurð, at Reyr (Ré) which is not far from Hamarkaupang. Earl Sigurð died there with a large number of his followers. And when this news came through to Iceland, with all the honors paid to Ari by the King and the Earl, then Þorvarð composed this verse:

Bold and fierce last summer,
With his shield by Erling's side
By brother stood, firm in the fight;
The youngster enlarged his honor—
Filling bravely my place and his
When coats of mail clashed and splintered.

The following spring Ari was keen to return to Iceland and the Earl gave him a fully equipped merchant ship. He had a favorable journey and he brought his ship into the harbor at Gásar in Eyjafjörð (Ámundi Koðránsson held a half-share in the ship.)

That summer is usually known as the Stone-throwing Summer because there had been a fight in the law-court at the Alþing in which many men were wounded. (The priest Halldór Snorrason was killed there and Þorvarð Þorgeirsson was injured.) Because of this incident, the leading chiefs thought it necessary to prolong the period of the Alþing so that the various legal disputes arising from the stone-throwing and the sword injuries might be dealt with straight away. Trustworthy witnesses have reported that, so astonishing was the stone-throwing incident, that, after the fight

was over, men could scarcely lift up some of the boulders from the ground, although they had been used as missiles.

When the supporters of prolonging the session had strongly urged their case, Þorgeir Hallason was selected to answer them as follows:

"It is true that I am not in favor of this motion to prolong the session, and cause loss and inconvenience for everyone present, chiefly because I am afraid that an extension will intensify and not diminish our problems and disputes. The wisest men have taught us that quarrels should be damped down and not rekindled. My own son has been injured and, so I think, deserves an adequate compensation, but, in seeking both his own interests and mine, I do not think it necessary to involve others in a general discussion; I prefer to wait, and take advice, and return home immediately."

Once he had spoken, the chieftains accepted his advice and the Alþing was closed.

Ari spent that autumn with his father at Hvassafel and stayed there for two years with Úlfheið and their son Guðmund. But at the end of this period Ari left Iceland and sailed for Norway with his brother Ingimund. Arriving in Norway, Ari resumed his position as a member of Erling jarl's court and stayed there throughout the winter, during which time Óláf Guðbrandsson, grandson of Harald gilli, began his rebellion.[8]

In the spring Ari prepared to return to Iceland and his ship was fully provisioned and ready to sail. Then a party of courtiers, who were jealous of Ari, made the charge that he was proving disloyal to Erling jarl by deserting him at the very time when the Earl would need all the support he could get in order to fight the war that must soon break out. As soon as these rumors reached Ari, he immediately removed his own belongings from the ship and returned to his position at the court of the King and the Earl. His brother, Ingimund the priest, and the other Icelanders set sail for Iceland and arrived home after a speedy voyage. That summer Ari stayed with the Earl and, in the autumn, journeyed with him east to Vík.

During the night following All Saints' Day the Earl and his

army had camped at a farm called Ryðjökul and, as was his custom, he rose in the night for matins and made his way to the church with some of his closest companions. After the service the Earl remained in church singing psalms. Then they could hear trumpet calls and sensed that trouble would follow. The Earl finished his psalm and then left the church; they could see that an army had penetrated into the farm and its buildings, because they were full of men. The Earl was eager to find a way back to his lodgings to find his own followers and his weapons. Björn bukk advised the Earl that he had no alternative but to flee, because they couldn't defend him (without weapons). Ari retorted:

"At least we are here and we should be even more eager to defend the Earl because we are unarmed."

They made their escape, pursued by the enemy. Close to the Earl were Björn bukk and Ívar gilli (both substantial landowners), Björn stallari, and Ari. When they came to a wooden fence, Björn bukk and Ívar gilli cleared it, but the Earl failed because he was heavily inactive and Björn and Ívar had to help him over. Ari dashed in between the Earl and his pursuers, placed himself as a shield before the Earl, turning to face the enemy. And so he gave his life for the Earl at the cost of his own, for until then he had been unharmed. A spear pierced his throat and pinned him to the fence. In this way Ari died, but the Earl received only a wounded thigh before he cleared the fence. In this attack ten men lost their lives besides Ari. According to the report of Þorkel hagi they were Ari Þorgeirsson, Einar opinsjóð, Björn sterki, Jón fjósi, Ívar dælski, Gunnar tjörskin, Þórodd the Jerusalem-pilgrim.

When the Earl cleared the fence and found a hiding place, he asked for Ari the Icelander. They told him that he was left behind on the other side of the fence, dead.

The Earl said: "Without a doubt, the man who has just died served me most faithfully and no one is left as brave as he. For he alone was ready to sacrifice his own life freely in order to save mine. Nor is it now possible for me to compensate his kinsmen for the loss they have received on my account."

Then the Earl rejoined his own force, formed them into battle order and ordered them to bury the dead.

This news of Ari reached Iceland the following summer. His brother Þorvarð began the composition of a short elegy about Ari because he believed that the most faithful memorial to Ari's death should be verses which, enshrining his courage, were broadcast as widely as possible.

3

I will now continue my narrative from the point where Guðmund, the son of Ari, was born at Grjótá in the very year that King Ingi was killed and Sturla's farm at Hvamm was destroyed by fire. Björn was then the Bishop of Hólar and Klæng was Bishop of Skálaholt; Archbishop Eystein had been consecrated the previous year. 1161 years had passed since the birth of Our Lord.[9]

The following summer Bishop Björn journeyed north to Þverá to consecrate his brother (also named Björn)[10] as abbot of the monastery there; on the way he confirmed Guðmund Arason at Möðruvellir, sometime in the spring after Easter. That same summer Bishop Björn set out to ride to the Alþing, but he was taken ill and was unable to finish his journey. He summoned together his kinsmen and friends and arranged all the matters that seemed most urgent and in this way made clear—as indeed it so turned out—that he knew he had to prepare for his own death. He gave a hundred hundreds from his see to the Monastery at Þverá, thereby making plain two things, the first that previously he had not been lavish in distributing his episcopal income and, secondly, that the Faith could best be supported by supporting the monastic way of life; he entrusted his kinsman Brand with the task of securing this gift from his successor as Bishop. In this he showed great foresight because he entrusted this job to the very man who would have to meet the obligation. Afterwards he returned to his home at Hólar, spending the entire summer on his bed, and he died in the autumn on the day before the Feast of the Virgins of Cologne.

Then Þorgeir Hallason offered to have Guðmund Arason in his own home as a foster son and Guðmund was then two years old.

In that same year the following notable events took place: King Hákon herðibreið was killed near Sekk and King Magnús began his reign; Abbott Ásgrím and Þorvald auðgi died; there was fighting at the local assembly south in Flói and Hrói was consecrated Bishop of the Faroe Isles. The next year Ari Þorgeirsson returned to Iceland and in that summer there was the battle at the Alþing already referred to. The same summer Brand Sæmundarson was elected as Bishop and he sailed for Norway.

The following summer Þorgeir and his sons attended the Alþing with an unusually large number of supporters, including nearly thirty Norwegians who had come with Ari; this was called the Summer of Shields. At this Alþing Þorgeir and his sons sought redress for the wounding of Þorvarð by the men of Vatnsfjörð and they were so successful that Þorvarð's assailant was declared an outlaw. After the sentence Pál and Snorri (from Vatnsfjörð) offered Þorgeir self-judgment.[11] On the eve of Maunday Thursday, Þorkel Flosason (who had been declared an outlaw the previous summer) paid a visit to Þorvarð and, placing his head on the table before him, awaited his decision. Þorvarð granted him his pardon and told him to go in peace wherever he wished; at the end of Easter week Þorvarð gave him a horse for his own use and hoped Þorkel would use it to visit him frequently.

The next year (Guðmund Arason's fifth year), Bishop Brand returned to Iceland; there was, too, a devastating earthquake in Grímsnes where eighteen men lost their lives. This was on the eve of St. Gregory's Fast. The following year Ari Þorgeirsson was killed and the relic of Christ's Blood was brought to Niðarós.[12] The same winter Jón Sigmundarson the Elder died and Abbot Hrein was consecrated.

4

In Guðmund's seventh year, news of Ari's death reached Iceland and because Guðmund could not inherit his father's property,[13] his kinsmen decided that he would be best provided for by becoming a scholar. Ingimund the priest took charge of his education so that the immediate first-fruits he received from his patrimony was to be beaten to his books. He was very stubborn

and soon showed that he resembled his father in overbearing temperament and would seek to have his own way. Ingimund was equally determined to keep him on a tight rein.

This was called the Winter of Marvels because so many strange things occurred: two suns were seen together in the sky; a troop of elves and other strange beings were seen riding in Skagafjörð by Ari Bjarnarson. On Hegranes a sow escaped from a sty in the night, broke open the farm door, leapt on to a bed where a woman slept with her child, seized the child and bit it to death before rushing out again. The child lay behind dead while the sow raced back to its sty. The next winter Þorgeir sold Hvassafel and decided to enter the monastery at Þverá; his sons, Þorvarð and Ingimund the priest, then took over the farm. The same year—Guðmund's eighth—the church at Laufás was burned. Later still, Ingimund and Guðmund moved north to Háls on a year's visit to Brand, who had married Gríma, the daughter of Þorgeir, while Þorvarð moved his household to Ljósvatn. Guðmund was then nine years old. After this Ingimund spent a second winter with his brother-in-law Brand at Háls. This was the year that Þorvarð slew Höskuld Herason and had to pay compensation for the killing of Kár Koðránsson.[14] Karl was consecrated Abbot of Þingeyrar when Guðmund was ten. Ingimund, his foster father, then set up house at Vaglar because Þorvarð had settled in the farm at Háls.

Now that Ingimund and Þorvald were neighbors, Guðmund and Ögmund (Þorvarð's son) played often together with many other youngsters but, whatever game they played, it always ended the same way: Guðmund was given a mitre, crozier, vestments, church and altar to play the bishop, while Ögmund played the soldier with axe, shield, and weapons. Later on, when each of them actually followed these careers in later life, these childhood incidents were construed as significant prophecies. This same year—called the Winter of Terror—eighty people died in avalanches, Archbishop Thomas was killed in England, and the monk Þorgeir Hallason died. That summer there was a fight between the followers of Einar Helgason and the men from Skógar (who followed Vilmund Snorrason, the son of Kálf, from Saurbær). Eight

of Vilmund's men were killed; Einar was wounded and had to be carried away on a shield, and many others of his men were also wounded.

The next spring Ingimund the priest moved his household to Upper Möðruvellir[15] and paid a rent of ten hundreds for the land. The same year Ingimund married Sigríð, the daughter of Tumi and, in the autumn, there was a pitched battle on Sælingsdalsheið between the forces of Sturla Þórðarson and Einar Þorgilsson, because Einar had robbed Ingjald, Sturla's son-in-law.

When Guðmund was twelve, Ingimund abandoned his farm and moved west to Skagafjörð to stay at Ási with Tumi, his father-in-law, because he and his wife (Sigríð) couldn't get on together. Guðmund went to live with Þorvarð at Háls. In the spring Grundar-Ketil died. During the autumn Ingimund left Ás, because he and Sigríð took no pleasure in each other, and many leading men invited him to their homes but he went to Hall Hrafnsson at Grenjaðarstaðir, where his nephew Guðmund came and joined him in the spring during Lent. That was called the Good Winter. There was a fire in Bergen that winter. The relics of Sunnifa had been moved to Bergen from Selja the previous summer[16] and the spread of the fire was stopped when her shrine was carried against it. Einar Grímsson was killed and a farm was burned belonging to Helgi Skaftsson in Saurbær on Kjalarnes. Styrkár Oddason became Lawspeaker.[17]

5

Ingimund and Guðmund spent four years in all at Grenjaðarstaðir. Guðmund was twelve when he received the tonsure from Bishop Brand and became an acolyte; at thirteen the Bishop ordained him as sub-deacon and at fourteen as a deacon. The chief incidents in this first year were these: Ingimund Jónsson, brother of Abbot Karl, was killed; Pál Þórðarson made a foray from Vatnsfjörð to Helgafel, together with Svein Sturluson and a large troop of men, and seized Hallgerð, the daughter of Runólf, and Valgerð, her daughter. The following year Helgi Skaftason was killed at the Alþing because he had burned the merchant

ship belonging to a Norwegian merchant called Brennu-Pál. Þorvarð Þorgeirsson led the case for the prosecution and, having gained the right to make his own terms with the Norwegians, his reputation was considerably enhanced. This year, too, Snorri Kálfsson died at Mel.

During the third year Bishop Klæng died, and at Ré King Eystein and Nikulás Sigurðarson were killed in battle.[18] This year, too, there were skirmishes between Arnór Kolbeinsson and Svein Sturluson, because Svein insisted on courting a woman after Arnór had prohibited it. Arnór pursued him with seven men and on the Latter Feast of Mary (September 8) they fought near Svínavatn. Svein had only one man with him and his companion was seized but Svein attacked Arnór, struck his hand and disabled him. Then the six set about Svein and left him for dead; but Svein recovered later from all his wounds, while Arnór was crippled for the rest of his life. This incident shows quite clearly a family characteristic inherited from Kolbein, not to subdue their rashness and anger, even for the sake of the solemn feast of Mary our Queen.[19] In the fourth year, when Guðmund was seventeen, Saint Þorlák was consecrated as bishop and Sverri assumed the title of King of Norway.

6

After this Ingimund moved from Grenjaðarstaðir to live with Þórarin at Stað in Kaldakin and stayed there for two years. Guðmund went inland to Saurbær in Eyjafjörð and lived there for two years with Óláf Þorsteinsson, while Ingimund remained at Stað.

In the first of these years Guðmund kárhöfði had a vision, and Bishop Þorlák first took up his see. The following spring Erling jarl died. The same year, the Feasts of St. Ambrose, St. Cecilia, and St. Agnes were written into the law and Whitsun-week was shortened by two days.[20] The next year Hallbera, daughter of Einar, died and then Guðný, daughter of Þorvarð, was betrothed to Þorgeir, the bishop's son, and the wedding feast was held at Háls with six hundred guests. This same year there was a pitched

battle on Íluvellir (near Trondheim) between King Sverri and Magnús.

In the spring, when Guðmund was nineteen, Ingimund made preparations for a voyage overseas together with Guðmund his foster son. They bought a passage at Gásar with Hallstein kulubák and set sail on Michaelmas Eve, a Sunday. The wind drove them north of Gnúp towards Melrakkaslétta until a head-wind drove them before it and they tossed for a week as they were driven west towards Hornstrandir. Then one night as they sat at supper, a Norwegian called Ásmund pulled back the awning flap[21] and shouted as he looked out:

"Jump to it! Off with the flaps. Up men! Take your fingers out! Breakers ahead. Abandon those tables and to hell with the food!"

They all leaped to it and flung back the awnings. Captain Hávarð asked: "Where's the ship's chaplain?"

"You needn't look far," said Ingimund, "and what do you want with him?"

"We wish to make our confessions."

He replied: "Why now, any more than last autumn when I asked you to confess in God's name each Sunday and you would never listen? There's no point in your confessing to God now because the sea is as close to me as to you. Have courage and be not afraid."

They answered him: "Then will you join us in making vows to undertake a pilgrimage and other penances—for nothing else can help us now?"

"Certainly not," said the priest, "I will only make a vow if I am allowed to decide what that vow shall be, otherwise I must assure you on behalf of all the Icelanders on board that not one of them shall support the vows you make; I can no more submit to your counsel now than you did to my advice last autumn."

"What vow do you wish to make, Sir priest?"

"I wish to make a vow by Almighty God and the Holy Cross, by the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints, that we give a tenth part of everything that comes ashore to the churches or to the poor as the Bishop sees fit."

They answered: "We will follow your advice, priest, because we cannot now dispense with your counsel."

And they all joined hands throughout the ship as a token of this vow.

By then they were so close to the breakers that an argument broke out about what they should do—each man wanted his own way. Some wished to hoist sail and rushed to do it. Captain Hávarð asked Ingimund the priest if he knew the highest name for God and he replied:

"I know many names for God—but I believe, as St. Paul says, that there is no name for God which is more powerful or more holy than Jesus. But I do not know whether you would call that the highest name."

He replied, "I don't call a man much of a priest who does not know the name of God."

Then the captain called to the other skipper, Hallstein: "Do you know the highest name?"

He replied: "God knows, that I can't really recall it at this moment, and that's a pity—but surely Þórð kráki knows it."

"Þórð kráki, do you know the name?"

He answered: "Bad luck, mate, it's slipped clean out of my mind. But I do remember someone who does know it. Ask Þorbjörn humla."

"Very well; Þorbjörn humla, you name the name, if you know it."

He said: "Honestly, I wish I could say, but I don't think I've ever heard the name. But I can tell you a man who does know it, I think. Ask Einar nefja."

So they did, and he named the name.

As they lifted the sail about the height of a man above the cargo, a heavy sea washed over the freight from both ends and broke over the goods. Every man clung to a rope. The priest Ingimund seized a boat hook and tried to pull down the sail, while Guðmund, his foster son, kept his place in the ship's boat[22] and, situated between the boat and the sail, tried to free the sail. At this a second heavy sea swept over the ship, snapping the mast-vane and driving overboard both the gunwales and all the

loose cargo, and everything except the men. The ship was badly battered and the boat was damaged. They were now clear of the breakers when the third (and the last) heavy sea hit them. After this they scooped out the water fore and aft with buckets while the sail was hoisted. At last they could make out the land, and they argued as to where they were. Some said that they must have got to Málmey but Þórarin rosti, an Icelander, said that if that was so, they hadn't drifted very fast. Finally, Má Eyjólfsson was certain that they had got west of Hornstrandir as far as Skjalda-Bjarnarvík because he had been there earlier that summer. So the captains asked him to guide them into harbor and they set their course north towards Þaralátrsfjörð because that was a safe harbor.

They began to assess the damage caused by the storm and Ingimund looked for his nephew Guðmund. One of the heavy seas had knocked him down into the boat, with his right foot hanging out over the gunwale and caught fast in the sail. Ingimund asked why he wasn't standing up, and he said there was so much weight on him that he couldn't move. They cleared the sail but still he couldn't stand, and again Ingimund asked him why he didn't get up. He said his foot was so heavy that he couldn't stir.

"Can it be broken?" asked Ingimund.

"I don't know," said Guðmund, "I can't feel a thing."

When they looked closer the foot was crushed against the gunwale as fine as a shard with the toes twisted around to where the heel should be. They made a bed for him there in the boat.

Ingimund the priest had lost his book chest because it had been swept overboard. This was a severe blow to him—the books in which he took such joy were gone and the man was injured whom he loved the most. But he thanked God for it all and realized how quickly his dream of the previous night had come true. He had dreamed that he had visited Archbishop Eystein who had received him gladly; but Guðmund, his foster son, had interpreted the dream as meaning that they would encounter not an Archbishop but an Arch-wonder. They day before they sailed into the breakers, Magnús Ámundason had asked if anyone knew any-

thing about breakers called the Þúfur-breakers and he was told that they were off Strandir.

"I had a dream that we should sail rather close to them," was his reply.

And not long after this conversation they became aware of the breakers.

The ship now made its way north past Reykjafjörð. They could make no further headway, lowered the sail and cast anchor; not long after this, the anchor line held fast and they lay there for the night. In the morning they made their way ashore on ship's planks; they cut through the mast and the anchor cable on board and allowed the ship to run aground. There was a great deal of discussion about how best to deal with Guðmund. Finally, a man called Bersi valbráð (because one of his cheeks was coal-black) raised an objection:

"Why should we bother about a lame man when we may not be able to save ourselves? Fling him overboard!"

Þórarin rosti retorted: "What a miserable suggestion! On any showing we should pitch you overboard. We've got other plans for Guðmund,"—and he dived overboard with Einar nefja.

The ship had swung round so that one side was aground. The crew lowered Guðmund from the side in a length of wadmal cloth; Þórarin and Einar each supported a thigh while Guðmund put an arm around each of their necks. Some others lined up behind them as a protection against the breakers and in this way they got to land, sometimes being sucked back by the undertow and sometimes being pushed forward by the surf, until with great effort they made the shore with him. After this the ship leaned over towards the sea and everything in it was swept into the water. The ship disintegrated and very little of its contents drifted to land.

Close to their landing place lived a healer named Snorri Arngeirsson. He looked after Guðmund, took him back to his own home and treated him as best he could. He was desperately poor but kindhearted. People collected there from the neighboring districts, offering them personal help and assistance in salvaging their goods. The priest Ingimund made a solemn vow in

order that his chest of books should come safely ashore. A few nights later it was reported that the chest, and all its contents, had come safely to land at Drangar—one clasp had held firm, though two others had snapped off. Every other chest that drifted to land was smashed and all its contents gone. Ingimund went across to dry out his books and stayed there until the Feast of St. Martin,[23] when he journeyed north again to meet his foster son and to find out how his foot was progressing. It was now firmly set and Ingimund returned south to Breiðabólstaðir in Steingrímsfjörð where Jón Brandsson lived. Jón had married Ingimund's niece, Steinun, the daughter of Sturla and Ingibjörg (the daughter of Ingimund's brother Þorgeir). Jón and his wife welcomed him with open arms and he spent the winter with them.

Three weeks before Easter, while bits of bone still protruded from his foot, Guðmund made his way south in this condition and arrived at Breiðabólstaðir *in passione Domini* and Ingimund, his foster father, was overjoyed to see him. He stayed there throughout Easter Week but they decided that he couldn't stay any longer while his foot was in this condition. He continued south to Hólar on Reykjanes to meet the priest Helgi Skeljungsson, who was well known as an excellent doctor. Helgi was willing and eager to treat Guðmund, who stayed there for a cure until the Removal Days were over. As soon as he arrived, Helgi massaged and worked on the foot a great deal in front of a fire; but two servants had to pull at the bits of bone with tongs before they came away. After this the foot began to heal and Guðmund was completely fit before the Removal Days, after which he returned north to Breiðabólstaðir.

The winter that Guðmund stayed at Strandir was called the Sickness Winter. Many men died whose passing was considered a great loss: Abbot Björn of Þverá and Styrkár the Lawspeaker, Odd Gizurarson and Arnór Kolbeinsson. After this Gizur Hallsson became Lawspeaker.[24] This was the time of the dispute over Deildartunga (in Borgarfjörð), when Guðmund was twenty years old.

7

During the next summer Jón Brandsson went north to attend a guild-feast at Þingeyrar and took Guðmund Arason with him because Ingimund wished him to pay a visit to Þorvarð at Háls, where Guðmund spent the following winter. By the spring, being anxious to return to his foster father, he accompanied Þorvarð southwards on his journey to the Alþing. This was known as the Barren Summer. (In the course of the previous winter King Valdimar of Denmark died, the son of King Knút;[25] also an earthquake killed eleven people. This was Guðmund's twenty-first year.) After the Alþing, he returned with Jón Brandsson, to Breiðabólstaðir.

That same summer Bishop Þorlák made his first visitation around the West Fjords and when he reached Steingrímsfjörð he was lodged in Kálfanes where there was a newly built, unconsecrated church. A distinguished gathering assembled there: Abbot Ögmund and Þorstein Tumason (who later became an abbot) and Ingimund with his foster son Guðmund. Guðmund preferred to gossip with the Bishop's clerks than to attend the services of the new church; so Ingimund found Guðmund and rebuked him:

"Go at once to the services and the consecration and pay attention to everything. Who knows when such knowledge will come in useful. Believe me, anyone who wishes to learn can do no better than learn from the man who is about to perform these functions here today."

This was indeed a double prophecy which events proved to be true on both counts. Bishop Þorlák was indeed a saintly man and Guðmund himself was later called upon to perform a similar service of consecration. In the autumn Ingimund visited a ship in Hvítá to buy goods that could be sold for a profit because he always made such preparations for a journey overseas whenever the opportunity might arise. He parted from his foster son in the Dales; Guðmund continued, with Sturla as his companion, northwards to Háls because Ingimund wished him to spend some time there. Guðmund didn't like his visit and after a fortnight he returned immediately to Breiðabólstaðir for the rest of the winter.

8

That winter Guðmund Bjarnarson was killed at Kleifar in Gilsfjörð. He was a friend of Jón Brandsson who asked Guðmund Arason to lead the prosecution in the lawsuit that followed this killing. Guðmund charged Koll-Odd with the murder and had him convicted with the penalty of full outlawry; but, once he had been declared an outlaw, Odd was given protection by Jón Hunröðarson. After the Alping Guðmund traveled west to Saurbær and held the court of execution (against Odd) at Staðarhól; from there he made his way to Breiðabólstaðir where he visited his guardian, Ingimund.[26] After a short stay, Guðmund set off for Hvamm where he intended to ask the help of his kinsman Sturla in finding the man whom he had had made an outlaw. Arriving at Hvamm, he learned that Sturla was on his deathbed and he died two nights after the arrival of Guðmund, who remained until Sturla was buried. He was in a quandary: the help on which he had relied was gone and yet his vehement wish to carry out the legal penalty was as strong as ever. How could he seek outside help and so avoid the dishonor accruing to a man who had obtained a legal sentence of outlawry against another without adequate means of executing the full penalty of the law and, at the same time, avoid the possibility of having to forfeit his holy orders and his priesthood? Almighty God supported him by putting ideas into his mind so that he decided to make a vow to Almighty God that he would give Him all the wealth that came to him because of Odd's outlawry, as long as the case was brought to an end without peril to Guðmund's soul.

This narrative has now been brought to the point where it diverged from the Saga of the Heath-slaying[27] and where two sets of incidents occurred at the same time.

9

This was the year of the lawsuit about the priest of Bær, Högni Þormóðarson, who had betrothed his daughter Snælaug to Þórð Böðvarsson, although there was a two-fold (legal) impediment

to their matrimony. This marriage was banned by the Bishop, St. Þorlák, who was so inspired by faith in God that he ascended the Lögberg with all his clergy and swore in public that this marriage contract was contrary to the Law of God. He then named witnesses, declaring the union null and void, and placed under an interdict all the parties to the contract. That summer, nicknamed the Disaster Summer, five large sea-going ships were destroyed and King Sverri fought the Battle of Íluvellir. Guðmund was twenty-two.

After Sturla's death, Guðmund visited Þingeyrar where lived Þorgrím alikarl, his friend and foster brother. He invited Guðmund to attend a horse-fight at Vatnsenda in Vestrhóp and Guðmund said:

"Would this be a wise thing to do? Odd, the man I've made an outlaw, and those who protect him, are sure to attend and that will be difficult for me to take calmly. Still, I'll come if you wish me to; and let God look after me."

So they set off and came to the crowded meeting. Jón Hunröðarson was there with a large crowd of scoffing idlers; others who came were Bjarni Hallson[28] with a band of men from Miðfjörð and Þórð Ívarsson, from Þorkelshvál, with a strong band of supporters. Then Hunröð (Jón's nephew) had an argument with Koll-Odd, which led to a fight in which Hunröð wounded Odd in the arm. Jón was so angry that he tried to attack his own nephew; in the melee that followed, Hunröð made a second lunge at Odd, missed him, and caught Jón's son, Eyjólf, who died immediately from the blow. At the same time Jón wounded a servant of Þórð Ívarsson, called Þórodd. Numerous others were wounded in this fight.

This was how Guðmund benefited from attending this gathering: God had taken vengeance on his enemies—Jón lost his own son because of Odd, who was himself severely wounded and was the underlying cause of all this trouble. And yet God had so watched over Guðmund that, neither by word nor deed, had he taken any part in the whole affair. After this Guðmund went north to Stað and spent the winter with Þorgeir, son of Bishop Brand, who treated him so well that subsequently Guðmund

maintained that no one, outside his own family, had ever shown him such kindness as did Þorgeir.

The following spring Þórð Ívarsson brought in his lawsuit against Jón Hunröðarson on the charge of wounding and Jón was declared an outlaw at the summer Alþing. Þórð's lawsuit was backed by Bishop Brand, his son Þorgeir, and their friends and relations, who journeyed from the north in large numbers to assist at the court of execution of Jón's outlawry. The outcome of the affair was that the dispute was placed under the Bishop's jurisdiction. When this happened, Þorgeir maintained that this affair of Jón could never reach a genuine settlement unless they also included, in the final award, Guðmund's legal suit for the outlawry (and harboring) of Koll-Odd. Þorgeir pleaded with such love and devotion on Guðmund's behalf that his argument was necessarily accepted and Guðmund's dispute was also included in the judgment of the Bishop and Þorgeir.

This was Guðmund's twenty-third year and these notable events took place: King Magnús Erlingsson was killed at Sogn in Norway; Tumi Kolbeinsson died; and farms were destroyed by fire at Möðruvellir and at Bakki in Miðfjörð.

10

The next summer Guðmund Arason attended the Alþing and afterwards made a journey south to Nes to attend feasts there with Magnús Ámundason and Þorfinn (who later became abbot). With Guðmund was the priest Gelli Höskuldsson, and because of this visit Guðmund was absent from the peace settlement at Ásgeirsá. But after this visit to Nes, he returned north to Stað and spent the rest of the year with Þorgeir and his foster father, Ingimund the priest.

The next spring Þorgeir gave up his establishment, planning a voyage to Norway, and he joined a ship in Eyjafjörð that belonged to Ögmund rafakoll. (His son was Helgi, later Bishop of Greenland.) In this ship with Þorgeir were many Icelanders, including the priest Þórálf Snorrason and Þorkel Eiríksson. The same summer another ship sailed from Eyjafjörð with Abbot

Karl, the priest Ingimund Þorgeirsson (Guðmund's foster father), Ögmund Þorvarðsson, and numerous Icelanders on board. Þorgeir's farm at Stað was taken over by a certain Hesthöfði-Gunnarsson, whose mother was Guðrún, the daughter of Sæmund and the sister of Bishop Brand. During this winter Einar Þorgilsson died at Staðarhól; the insurrection of the Kuflungar began;[29] Einar káti and many worthy men lost their lives on All Saints' Day, and an avalanche descended in Geitdal which killed eighteen men. Guðmund was now twenty-four.

11

The following spring during Lent, Bishop Brand ordained Guðmund as a priest, four nights after the Feast of St. Gregory.[30] At their parting Ingimund, his foster father, gave Guðmund all his choicest and most scholarly books as well as a set of vestments; he did not abandon him until his ward was ordained priest and fully established in an honorable way of life. And so Guðmund was separated from the two men he loved best, Ingimund and Þorgeir.

The two ships then sailed away from Eyjafjörð and came to Norway and spent the winter in Trondheim. Þorgeir, the bishop's son, stayed the winter with Archbishop Eystein, while Ingimund the priest had lodgings in the town and was granted the use of the chapel of St. John for services in the Christ Church; but he spent all the feast-days, at Christmas and Easter, with the Archbishop, who showed him great favor. The following spring Þorgeir returned to Iceland with his companions but Ingimund stayed in Norway for two years, performing services at the Church of Mary in Stað. Archbishop Eystein set a high value on Ingimund's learning because when Bishop Jón the First—known as Knút—died in Greenland, Archbishop Eystein wished to consecrate Ingimund as bishop in his place. His modesty can be clearly recognized and used as an example, in that he declined the offer.

During Ingimund's first winter in Norway, Guðmund stayed with his uncle, Grím, at Hof and acted as parish priest at Hof.

This winter Böðvar Þórðarson and Þorvard auðgi died. Guðmund was then twenty-five.

During the return voyage from Norway, Þorgeir, the Bishop's son, was taken ill at sea and kept his bed until the ship reached Iceland. After they had landed his sickness worsened and he died two nights before the First Feast of the Virgin Mary. His body was brought to Hólar and the arrival of the corpse was the first indication that the Bishop had had of his son's sickness and death. His loss was a severe blow to his friends and kinsmen, but most of all to the Bishop. Guðmund Arason has said that no man's death had ever affected him as acutely as this one; indeed, so strong was his affection for Þorgeir that after his death Guðmund's nature was significantly altered. He was then the parish priest at Hof and he devoted himself so completely to prayers, divine services, acts of charity, and severe self-discipline that it seemed to others that he would not be able to sustain this excessive rigor, and they feared that he would succumb to the severities of his practices and his sorrow at Þorgeir's death. He accepted young clerks for instruction and it was his custom to teach them, and to write, in the intervals between divine services. He spent a large part of each night in the church, both in the early part of the evening and in the hours before dawn, and he invariably went to confession whenever there was a priest available. Wherever he went he scrutinized thoroughly the books and information which he had not seen before.

All men were forcibly impressed by his powerful and instructed faith—the wisest men were impressed most of all. He adopted into his way of life many practices which had never before been heard of (or followed) here in Iceland. Even so, it was thought that the greatest change in his disposition had occurred during that winter when he was laid up after the shipwreck at Strandir, because then he was completely depressed and miserable, day and night, until he returned to his foster father. Thereafter, each year saw some improvement in his conduct and behavior, so that eventually he seemed to have become quite a different man, in every way, from what he had promised to be when he was young. Consequently, many signs were manifested when he

blessed springs and performed other special services, and many people attached great importance to these signs as evidence that his way of life was pleasing to God. The ordinary folk had no doubt in their minds about his way of life—they gave him a nickname and called him "Guðmund the Good."

As always happens, however, not everyone was satisfied even though great benefits came (through him) to the community. Some, indeed, thanked God because in time of need they had received spiritual and bodily comfort from Guðmund; there were others who were jealous because, despite their apparent superiority in rank and wealth, they were not endowed with his special gifts. Every year his annual stipend was used up in giving food and clothes to the poor and to his kinsfolk. In particular, he maintained seven people entirely in this way.

Those who were jealous of him saw to it that it would be harder for him to look after the needs of others; they so arranged matters that he was given charge of parishes with inferior stipends. Then Bishop Brand, demonstrating his own ill will towards Guðmund, laid claim to his books and vestments and declared that the see at Hólar was the rightful heir to the effects of Ingimund the priest. But nothing could diminish his acts of charity or his personal self-discipline, because he was assisted by the help of virtuous men so that he never gave up any of the things he had set his hand to.

Many memorable events occurred this year. Jerusalem was captured by the Saracens and all the Christians there were either forced to flee or else killed, and all traces of Christianity were destroyed. Darkness covered the sun at mid-day and many ignorant men believed that the end of the world had come. This was known as a hard year, for there was a severe shortage of hay and a famine that summer, and not one ship came to Iceland from Norway. Guðmund was then twenty-six.

12

The following spring Guðmund stayed as a guest at Miklabær with Auð-Björn and remained with Björn for two years. During the first year of his visit Archbishop Eystein died after he had

consecrated Jón, foster son of King Sverri, as Bishop of Greenland. Guðmund was then twenty-seven. In his second year at Miklabær King Henry of England died and that winter Jón, Bishop of Greenland, was in Iceland in the East Fjords. Abbot Ögmund was drowned in the spring and Abbot Karl died. At this time Ingimund the priest was in Bergen and the wisest and most honorable men discovered that the more they got to know him the more they respected his way of life, so that he was greatly honored by Jon kuflung[31] and his supporters. It also helped him that Ögmund Þorvarðsson was already in Bergen and held in high esteem, and he welcomed his uncle Ingimund and offered him all the help and support that he could give.

The previous spring Ingimund had been on a trading voyage to England and he had then returned to Bergen in the autumn. When they returned from England with a fine cargo of wine, honey, wheat, cloth, and many other things, the supporters of Jón kuflung wished to seize and hold the cargo. At this Ögmund went before Jón kuflung and said:

"Surely it is a fact that if King Ingi were now alive he would not have allowed the brother of Þorvarð Þorgeirsson to be robbed if by chance he had come within his jurisdiction; nor do I think that King Magnús would have allowed it, if only for the sake of Ari. Now, Sire, for their sake and because of my poor petition, I hope and trust that you will allow him to keep his property without molestation."

Jón replied: "You have spoken well and it shall be done that everything that belongs to him shall be fully protected. Go and see to it with your kinsman; he is welcome to us and to God."

Ögmund went immediately to the ship and repeated Jón's statement. After this Jón's men went over to eight large wine casks which the merchants had brought and asked for the owners. Ingimund the priest claimed four or five of the casks and a similar share of all the other goods they inspected after this, until the officers, suspecting that he couldn't possibly be as wealthy as his claims suggested, accused him of it:

"Look here, you priest, we think you are claiming goods that

belong to the others; we are not going to take this lying down and lose our legal prizes."

After this they seized one cask which really did belong to Ingimund and also sixteen ells of russet-colored cloth of his, all of the best quality. Ingimund said nothing at this, preferring to lose it rather than to begin an argument.

After this Ingimund found lodgings and stayed the winter. Later on, it chanced that he recognized some of the stolen cloth in the tunics of some courtiers. He happened to mention this in conversation with Ögmund and asked him to let the matter drop because he didn't wish to stir up trouble on his own account and added that he didn't ever expect to go short of money. Björn bríkarnef, Provost of the King's Guards, had been the chief instigator of the plunder of Ingimund's goods after the other officers had decided to obey Jón's declaration.

13

One day Ögmund happened to catch sight of the men who were wearing tunics made from Ingimund's cloth and he said to his friends, Bárð sála and Pétur glyfsa and Eindríði: "It isn't really good enough. Here, before my very eyes, are walking Björn bríkarnef and his crowd, dressed in clothes that were stolen from my cousin, Ingimund the priest, last autumn!"

Eindríði said: "Why do you keep quiet and not lay claim to it?"

Ögmund answered: "He doesn't wish to claim it himself because he's anxious not to stir up trouble."

Eindríði said: "We can't let wasters like this put one over us and provoke our own friends in this way. If your kinsman won't act, then we'll certainly take the matter in hand."

They got up immediately and went out of doors with their axes at the ready. The Norwegians made their way to the banqueting-hall, and Ögmund with them, to the place where Björn bríkarnef was drinking inside with nearly forty guards. Eindríði was all for rushing them at once but Bárð said it was foolish to take on forty when they were only four—and suggested that they

wait until the others came out. As luck would have it, the first four to come out were the very ones they would have chosen, all wearing the stolen material. Eindríði gave Björn his death blow immediately while Bárð, Ögmund, and Pétur killed the other three without their offering any resistance.

The Provost's trumpet was sounded and the guards assembled, almost four hundred strong. The news was brought to Jón kuflung who commanded them to sound the Assembly bugle and instructed each side to state their case before him. Now Bárð and Pétur were near relatives to Archbishop Eystein and Jón was so much on their side that he dismissed all the plunderers from his personal service while Ögmund's party recovered all the cloth that belonged to them, and in this way this case was closed for good.

The following spring Ingimund joined a ship called Stangarfoli that was preparing to sail to Iceland. In this ship was Bergþór, the son of Þórð Ívarsson, and many other distinguished Icelanders and Norwegians. Their ship was lost on the deserted shores of Greenland and they all perished. This came to light fourteen years later when their ship was found and the remains of seven men in a cave. Ingimund the priest was one of them: his corpse was intact and undecayed, as were his clothes, and the skeletons of the other six were by his side. They also found a wax tablet close to him with runes that told the story of their death. Most men thought this a signal mark of God's favor towards the life and conduct of Ingimund the priest in that his body should have laid so long exposed without injury or corruption. The summer in which Stangarfoli was wrecked, Ásmund kastanrassi came to Iceland from Greenland and Guðmund was then twenty-eight.[32]

14

When Guðmund was priest at Miklabær, he also performed divine service at a farm called Marbæli and he was singing Mass there on a feast day. A wise and virtuous woman, Hallfríð, the daughter of Ófeig, was staying at the farm. She was present when Guðmund said Mass and, as was her custom, she followed the

Mass closely and attentively, observing Guðmund throughout. When the Gospel had been read and he turned towards the congregation and said: "Dominus vobiscum," then she saw fire issuing from his mouth into the air, much brighter than any she had ever seen before.

Later Guðmund left Miklabær and went to Viðvík where he stayed the winter with Má Finnsson. On one occasion Guðmund was out in the church at his devotions and farmer Má entered the church. As he entered the church door he saw a small bird fly away from Guðmund's shoulder in the air and then disappear.

This year Ásmund kastanrassi's ship was destroyed and with it many Icelanders who were greatly missed. At this time, too, Abbot Hall and Earl Eirík both died[33] and there was a battle in the east of Vík (in Norway). Guðmund was now twenty-nine.

15

During the next spring, a female relative of his, Arnþrúð, who lived at Vellir in Svarfaðardal, invited Guðmund to stay with her and supervise her household affairs. (She was the daughter of Forni and a widow.) Her second husband had been Eyjólf and they had two sons, Brand and Klæng. By her first husband, Snorri, she also had two sons, Þorstein and Snorri. A Norwegian sailor had killed her husband Snorri, because he was too poor to pay a trading debt owed to the Norwegian by one of Snorri's farm-laborers. Önund Þorkelsson joined this Norwegian's ship and sailed to Norway with him and this was the beginning of the trouble that ended with the sons of Arnþrúð joining the force that eventually burned Önund in his farm.[34]

During the autumn of Guðmund's second year at Vellir, Sumarliði Ásmundarson was killed in his tent (at a public gathering) and the murder was imputed to Snorri Grímsson, Guðmund's first cousin. However, Bishop Brand involved himself in the lawsuit that followed and sought to bring in a jury's verdict against Snorri at the assembly for plotting with, and aiding, Brand Örnólfsson who actually dealt the fatal blow. But because of the testimony of Guðmund and many other notable men who supported Snorri,

Bishop Þorlák had Snorri cleared of this charge of conspiracy. Guðmund the priest was now thirty.

Two nights before Christmas, when Guðmund was thirty-two, Bishop St. Þorlák died at Skálaholt. A little earlier the Bishop had invited Gizur Hallsson to stay with him when his physical condition had begun to weaken, and Gizur remained at Skálaholt as long as the Bishop lived. Three men honored Bishop Þorlák most of all and they themselves have almost received a similar honor for themselves from other men. One was Pál, his nephew, who succeeded him as Bishop of Skálaholt;[35] the second was Þorvald Gizurarson who later became the greatest lay leader and was the most well-endowed of all his contemporaries; the third was Guðmund gríss who gave away much more than most men for the sake of God and later followed the express Gospel command by abandoning in one day all his possessions and those he loved and entering a monastery. One of the sons of Guðmund gríss was Magnús goði and another was Þorlák, the father of Bishop Árni the First,[36] who was one of the most honored men in Iceland. The following were sons of Þorlák Guðmundarson: Orm the priest, Canon of Þykkvabær, and Magnús who died as a canon in Viðey. Þorlák's daughters were the nun Ásbjörg, mother of Bishop Árni the Second[36] and Abbess Agata, Þorgerð and Guðrun who were sisters in Kirkjubær. Bishop Þorlák had a high opinion of the son of Gizur and had shown the loving affection of a guardian towards Magnús as long as he wished to stay there. The blessed Bishop Þorlák had shown him distinctive favor because he was wise, extremely learned, and most eloquent. Bishop Þorlák had ordained Þorvald and Magnús as priests. Bishop Þorlák placed his residence at Breiðabólstaðir in Fljótshlíd in charge of his nephew Orm Jónsson, and this was the best of all the residences which he controlled.

The summer following the winter of the Bishop's death, the Vatnsfirðing Snorri Þórðarson died on the Feast of Remigía.

16

When the priest Guðmund Arason had been a few years at Vellir and the mistress of the household, Arnþrúð, and her sons

(Brand and Klæng) had inherited Sakka in Svarfaðardal, then one summer at the Alþing the Abbess of Kirkjubær, Halldóra, daughter of Eyjólf, invited Guðmund to move to the east and manage her convent there. He agreed to this and it was decided that she should send servants (to help him move house) during the summer.

After the Feast of St. Óláf a ship from Norway arrived at Gásar with Bishop Pál on board. Bishop Brand rode to Grund where he met Bishop Pál. Guðmund also met the bishops there and obtained their permission to take over the duties at Kirkjubær.

As soon as the parishioners at Vellir learned of the new arrangement, they met Bishop Brand with the request that Guðmund should be forbidden to leave them and the Bishop agreed to this. When the parishioners then met Guðmund, and told him of the Bishop's decision, he immediately called on the Bishop who reaffirmed his ban on Guðmund's departure. Consequently, Guðmund returned to Vellir and stayed there throughout the winter. This incident impressed Bishop Brand so much that (he said) it reminded him very closely of a similar happening in the life of Pope Gregory.[37]

During the next winter there was a dispute between Guðmund and Þorstein Þraslaugarson who lived in Vellir, because the people of the district gave to Guðmund the gifts that they had promised (in times of extremity) to the Saints; Þorstein asserted that Guðmund was using these gifts for his own personal use. Again it was Guðmund's frequent practice on festivals to allow men to kiss the holy relics, and Þorstein had said that he wasn't sure whether they were the bones of saints or simply horses' bones. The upshot of all this was a bitter quarrel, and Þorstein petitioned Bishop Brand to remove Guðmund from the parish.

The following spring Bishop Brand went north to Vellir and discovered for himself that the ordinary people up there had no desire to see Guðmund leave. The Bishop then offered Guðmund the living at Vellir, but he refused to accept it and the Bishop then gave the benefice to another priest.

During the spring Guðmund summoned Þorstein on two

charges: the first, that he had accused him of theft in respect of the gifts of the parishioners, and the second, a charge of blasphemy in that he had stated that the saints' relics were the bones of horses. Guðmund left the district at the end of May and went to Ufsir.

He rode to the Alþing that summer and was awarded the right of self-judgment in his lawsuit against Þorstein. At the Alþing Sigurð Ormsson invited Guðmund to stay with him in Svínafel. When the Alþing had concluded he journeyed south to Haukadal, then east to Svínafel and from there he went east across the fjord and so to Fljótsdalsherað, to Vapnafjörð and Öxarfjörð and then northwards to Eyjafjörð, eventually arriving at Ufsir just before the beginning of winter, towards the end of October. During the course of this long journey, to my own knowledge, many remarkable incidents took place when he held special services and blessed many wells.

17

In the spring of the year in which the sons of Þórð and of Arnþrúð were killed at Laufás in the autumn, Guðmund Arason accepted the invitation of Kolbein Arnórsson to stay with him at Stað in Skagafjörð.[38] During the Alþing, Bishop Pál sent messengers to Bishop Brand and Guðmund the priest asking them to come south to Skálaholt immediately the Alþing was concluded. (It had been decided at this Assembly to exhume the relics of Bishop Þorlák.) Leaving the Alþing they arrived at Skálaholt on the Feast of St. Margaret.

During the ceremony held in honor of God and the blessed Bishop Þorlák, Bishop Pál placed Guðmund next to the bishop's throne at all the services and allowed Guðmund to share with him the ceremony of opening the coffin, when it was carried into the church. Indeed, it was Guðmund who really decided what words were sung when the holy relics were taken from the ground. Many miracles occurred because of the merits of the blessed Bishop Þorlák.

After this Guðmund returned and spent the winter with Kolbein at Stað, but the following spring he visited Kolbein Tumason at Viðimýr. Guðmund went to the Alþing that summer and, after it was concluded, he went westwards to Borgarfjörð where many men in that district had invited him to their homes. After this he continued westward to Hvamm and was present at the wedding of Snorri Sturluson. From there he went first to Fagrdal and then to Reykjahólar where he consecrated a spring, in which people later urinated as a mark of their disrespect for him—and after that no one was healed any longer by that spring. Then he moved to Steingrímsfjörð and in the autumn arrived home (via Miðfjörð) at Viðimýr where he spent the winter in high favor. Kolbein showed him so much respect and affection that he said that Guðmund was truly a saintly man and he declared that he, Kolbein, had abundant proof of this. The next summer the Feast of St. Þorlák was instituted by law.

The winter that Guðmund spent at Viðimýr was a severe one and many people suffered grievously. Bishop Saint Jón appeared to many people in dreams and assured them that the weather would improve if his holy relics were exhumed. When Bishop Brand was told of this, he sent word to Guðmund Arason asking him to come and supervise this ceremony because the bishop himself was confined to bed. The bishop had summoned many clergy for this service and the weather was so severe that Guðmund arrived a day later than the invitation, even though he had been summoned. When he did arrive, they exhumed the holy relics of Bishop Jón, accompanied by some significant miracles, seven nights after the Feast of St. Matthías.

In the spring Guðmund went north to Eyjafjörð, but, while he was away from home, his mother (Úlfheið) died and her body was taken to Hólar where the bishop received it with loving care. Returning home, Guðmund made immediate plans for another journey. That summer he went to the Alþing where the Feast of Bishop Jón was made legal because of the petitions of Bishop Brand and the eloquent plea that Guðmund made before the Alþing.

During this Alþing the men from the West Fjords invited him to visit them and this he did, first touring Borgarfjörð and then Breiðafjörð. He was taken from Reykjanes to Flatey. Þorgils Gunnsteinsson had allowed his son and one servant to look after Guðmund's boat. Þorgils asked Guðmund to find a favorable wind for the two lads on the return trip, "because they are not very strong and I entrust them to your charge."

The priest replied: "I shall pray to God that He will give them a favorable breeze."

It was quite calm when they made Flatey. When they were ready to return, the lads went to the boat, made ready the rigging and asked the priest to provide them with a wind. Guðmund left them and entered the church. When they cast off, they hauled up the sail and caught a following wind at once—they had a full sail until they made land and the longer they sailed the stronger was the breeze.

19

Guðmund continued his journey westward along this district and when he came to Sauðlausdal he consecrated some water which a woman brought to him in a hat. He then turned north until he reached the home of Þórð Arason at Keldudal (in Dýrafjörð); his hand was withered and gave him so much pain that he couldn't cut his own food. During the night, failing to get any sleep, Þórð went out of doors and, as he reentered the house he saw a great light shining down on Guðmund's bed, just like a sunbeam. He stretched out his withered hand into the light which shone on his hand as brightly as it had done before. After this the hand was healed and free from pain and the light faded away.

Guðmund went from there to Árni rauðskegg in Haukadal. At night when he was in bed, a woman servant was found to massage his foot. Her hand was crippled so that three fingers were clenched against the palm. Because Guðmund thought she was rubbing too gently, he stretched out his leg as hard as he could so that his heel struck the bent fingers that were clenched

and pressed into them, causing her considerable pain. But a few nights later she came to Guðmund and showed him her hand completely healed. And all those who saw it gave thanks to God. Then he made for Ísafjörð, arriving at Súðavík for the Feast of St. Matthew[39] and there he gave thirty hundred wadmal[40] to Bárð (his cousin) as a dowry, because he was betrothed to the daughter of the priest Steinþór Bjarnarson.

A woman called Þuríð also arrived at Súðavík after a hasty journey; she was the mistress of Árni rauðskegg despite the interdict of Bishop Pál which had failed to separate them. But having heard of the teaching of Guðmund she was consumed by a desire to meet him. She had to steal away from Árni, who loved her dearly and by whom she had had children. She was extremely beautiful. And now she met Guðmund on the Feast of St. Matthew and with tears of repentance asked for his mercy and charity that she might abandon her evil way of life. She benefited so much from this encounter with Guðmund that she never again returned to that old way of life but followed Guðmund at all times thereafter, except when the hostility of others forced them to separate.

From Súðavík he set out for Vatnsfjörð and, from there, to meet Jón Brandsson at Steingrímsfjörð—by now he had a large following. And it was suggested that they should send men ahead so that Jón should not be taken unawares. Guðmund said there was no need of that, "for God will provide for us and send them a whale before we depart from Jón's house."

This prophecy was fulfilled, because that same day a whale was driven up on to that part of the shore in which Jón had sole rights of drift and he was informed of it the next morning. Jón presented Guðmund with a book, expensively bound, which Bishop Pál had given to Jón. After this Guðmund went to Broddanes and then north around the bay to Miðfjörð until he eventually arrived at Vatnsdal.

That autumn, while he was at Hof, a curious event took place. Guðmund was praying over a sick man and holding his holy relics above him. He lay on a bench by the sick man's side and, so it seemed to the bystanders, he fell asleep as he prayed. A

deacon was sharing the bench with him and, as he slept, Guðmund collapsed on top of the deacon. But when he had lain like this for only a short time, the deacon realized that no weight was pressing on him. Yet the deacon, and many others, could see that Guðmund was lying there. This phenomenon continued for a long time. And when he awoke, the deacon asked him why he could feel nothing although Guðmund lay across his chest—but he refused to discuss it.

A story then spread from the west, from the fjords there, that a man called Snorri, living in the west at Skálavík, was plagued by a troll-woman who attacked him with such tenacity that he feared for his survival. On this very night that we have just talked about—it was a Saturday night—Snorri was making his solitary way to divine service because he had a long way to go. The troll-woman caught up with him and attacked him, forcing him up towards the mountain. He prayed that Guðmund the priest should help him, if he really had so much influence with God as he claimed, and save him from this demon. Immediately it seemed to him that a light surrounded him and, with the light, there came a man in ecclesiastic vestments carrying a sprinkling vessel from which he sprinkled the troll-woman. She vanished as though she had sunk into the ground. Then the light accompanied the man right up to the farm and he believed that he clearly recognized Guðmund Arason as the man who came with the radiant light. Now these two things occurred simultaneously: that same time Guðmund had protected Snorri and that the deacon perceived that Guðmund's body did not weigh down on him.

This same deacon had a boil on his head and on one occasion, as he supported Guðmund's arm during the Mass, Guðmund's elbow pressed against the boil, inflicting a severe pain. But when the Mass was over, the boil had disappeared.

Afterwards they made their way to Þingeyrar, arriving there before the Feast of All Saints. Abbot Karl was already there as was Gunnlaug the monk. During the day they met him in procession although he was only a priest and they greeted him with

the responses, *"Vir iste in populo suo mitissimus apparuit sanctitate dei et gratia plenus: iste est, qui assidue . . ."*

This shows quite clearly how favorably these men regarded and honored him before they were blinded by ambitious pride.[41] Guðmund preached a long sermon on the Feast of All Saints and afterwards he made his way to Blöndubakki, where he stayed for some time.

From there he was carried by sledge up along Langadal and men were sent to obtain the fattest and strongest horse in the dales—but they were refused permission to use it. That night the horse walked into the home-pond and was drowned. Guðmund continued his journey until he arrived home at Viðimýr on the Feast of St. Nicholas,[42] and spent the winter there in high favor, widely esteemed.

20

In the spring Guðmund accepted invitations to visit the northern district around Eyjafjörð, before he traveled from the north, via Flatey, to the Alþing. From there he received invitations from people in the southern and eastern parts of Iceland and, after the Alþing, he rode south to Skálaholt. The nun[43] Ketilbjörg died on the night of his arrival and Bishop Pál asked Guðmund to lead the chant over her body, while the Bishop and Gizur Hallsson assisted at the vigil. Guðmund's conducting of this service was so memorable that, in his oration over the grave, Gizur testified that they had never heard such a dirge before, for this in itself was a testimony to her sanctity that such a distinguished service had been granted her.

After this Guðmund continued his eastward journey across the rivers. The priest Árni from Skúmsstaðir had invited him to his home because they suffered from a plague in which seven men, as well as cattle and horses, had died. Guðmund spent the night there and consecrated some water and then processed with holy relics, sprinkling water on the ploughed fields and the home-meadow and all around the pastures. And immediately the plague disappeared. Afterwards he continued his journey east to Eyjafjöl, then to Síða and to Ver.

He came to a farm called Lómagnúp, where the river was so much in flood that farmer Árni had barely escaped with his life; and indeed the man who had crossed the river before him had been drowned in the swirling torrent which had now burst its banks and covered the surrounding land. People were held up on the eastern bank, unable to cross, because the river was obviously dangerous. When Guðmund's party reached the river, they dismounted, saw that the river was impassable and waited. They could then see the floods abate. Those who had waited on the east bank for a long time, not trusting to ride across, could now see the water subsiding and decided to ride across. Guðmund and his companions also rode into the river, so that both parties met in the middle of the river and then crossed it in safety. But as soon as both parties were clear of the water the torrent swelled once more and was impassable for many days afterwards.

21

From there Guðmund rode to stay with Sigurð Ormsson at Svínafel, where Kolbein Tumason had already arrived for a feast, and they spent three nights there together. When Kolbein left, Guðmund and Sigurð rode with him a part of the way. On parting, Guðmund and Sigurð rode alone to an isolated place because Sigurð wished to discuss privately the problems that had arisen from his lawsuits against Sæmund.[44] For Sigurð could scarcely tolerate the disgrace and humiliation he had suffered from this dispute and he wanted Guðmund's advice—he said that he was consumed with the sole desire to seek revenge on Sæmund.

Guðmund advised him to act with the utmost caution, "because you should rest content with the fact that you are being slandered because you have acted honorably in this dispute. I will now pray to God that He will support you and watch over you."

Sigurð replied, "I could wish for something different: that you ask God to grant you the power to obtain for me an establishment in the northern district where I should gain honorable support from others, because I have a strong presentiment about you, that

in the future you will wield much more power and influence than you do now. Then I would bestow my present estate on my kinsman Jón Sigmundarson. If you will promise me this then I shall not pursue my revenge; if not, I shall certainly seek out Sæmund, whatever the outcome."

Guðmund then said that the only thing he could promise was to pray that God should decide whether he was to assist Sigurð in the way he had suggested. On this same day that Guðmund and Sigurð had this discussion, Bishop Brand died. As a result both things were brought to pass—the advancement of Guðmund which Sigurð had foretold, and the promise of favorable support made by Guðmund to Sigurð that, in exchange for a cessation of his hostility towards Sæmund, he would obtain an estate for him in the north. For, although neither of them knew it, this was the day on which Guðmund was granted the rule and authority of a bishop.

22

It was also at Svínafel that Sigurð asked Guðmund the priest to give him some holy relics, and Guðmund granted his request. As he gave him a piece of the bone of Bishop Jón, a priest called Stein said that he didn't like its color nor did it seem very holy to him. Guðmund replied mildly and asked whether Stein believed that Bishop Martein was less holy because his bones were black and whether or not he thought that Bishop Þorlák was a saint. Stein replied that he did not believe that Bishop Jón could rank half as high as Bishop Þorlák.

Guðmund then said: "Let us all pray to God and the blessed Bishop Jón that he show us some sign of Jón's holiness that will modify the belief of Stein the priest."

They all fell on their knees with Guðmund and afterwards he allowed them all to kiss the bone. Gradually they all became conscious of a powerful fragrance from the bone as of the sweetest incense—all except Stein who was not aware of the fragrance. Stein was bitterly ashamed of his lack of faith and of his words of disbelief and he recognized the anger of God and Bishop Jón

towards him because this special act of grace had been withheld from him. And with tears he begged forgiveness from God and Saint Jón the Bishop.

Guðmund then offered to give Stein the relic of Bishop Jón if he really wished to honor him with complete belief. Stein replied that he would gladly accept the bone but he was afraid lest Bishop Jón would not accept his act of reverence: Guðmund asked them all to intercede with Saint Jón the Bishop that he should forgive the words of Stein the priest. After this Stein accepted the relics and he became aware of the same fragrance as the others. They all thanked God and the blessed Bishop Jón; all the bells were rung, the *Te deum* was sung and in this way the miracle was made known.

Another remarkable event took place there: the river flowing past Svínafel was in spate and broke into the ploughed fields and the pasture land, causing severe damage. Sigurð asked Guðmund to go and sing prayers over the water. He went in procession with his sacred relics and clerks and chanted for a long time over the waters. By the next morning the river had left its original course and had cut a new channel through the sand banks to the east of the farm.

An old woman was lying close to death in her bed at Svínafel and for seven nights she had been speechless, incapable of receiving any food and unable to move any part of her body except her fingers and toes. Her spirit had not left her although she had received extreme unction. She was a virtuous soul. And as Guðmund was all ready to leave Svínafel and had caught hold of the bridle of his horse, he said: "Alas, I have neglected to kiss that dear sick woman in there with my blessing. I must remedy that."

He re-entered the house with all the others and walked into the room where the old woman lay very close to her last moment. He kissed her and said: "Blessing and peace be upon you, my daughter, for now you shall go to meet God and carry with you my greetings to Mary, the Mother of God, and to the Archangel Michael, to John the Baptist, to Peter and Paul, to King Óláf, and especially to my friend Ambrose."[45]

At this the old woman answered so loudly that all could hear it quite clearly, even those who were outside the room.

"Yes, I will," was her reply, and these were her last words.

This was close to midday and she died at three o'clock that afternoon.

23

Guðmund and his companions continued their journey towards the East Fjords and reached Stafafel on the Feast of St. Bartholomew. It was there, during matins, that he received the news of the death of Bishop Brand Sæmundarson and he was as stunned by the news as if he had been struck by a stone. Immediately he conducted a Requiem mass and, on the following day, he carried out all the prayers for his soul, and the funeral services, with devoted love and care.

They then continued on their way to Fljótsdalsherað and arrived at the house of Jón Sigmundarson at Valþjófsstaðir on the Feast of St. Egidíus,[46] which was the patronal anniversary of their church; and he was received enthusiastically. That evening, as Jón was walking with Guðmund into the church, Guðmund asked for the news. Jón said that he had notable and happy news for him.

"The men in Skagafjörð district intend to hold a meeting tomorrow to elect their bishop and you will certainly be chosen because that is the will of God."

And from that moment Guðmund was so disturbed in his heart that he could neither eat nor sleep with any comfort because of his fear and terror of these events.

On the eve of the Feast of the Holy Cross,[47] he arrived at the farm called Hlíð in Fljótsdalsherað. During the night he dreamed that he entered the church at Vellir in Svarfaðardal and it seemed to him that the altar, adorned with the most precious vestments, fell against his breast. The next day he and his companions crossed north over the heath to Vapnafjörð and arrived at Krossavík in the evening. And as they were at table, messengers arrived from Kolbein Tumason, and Einar fork came in and greeted Guðmund with great courtesy. Guðmund asked for his news and Einar said:

"My news is good. Kolbein and all the men of the district have

elected you as their bishop. I bring here letters and their verbal request that you should return home as quickly as possible."

Guðmund was stunned by this message and for a long time he could not speak. Then he prayed that God should decide these things in a way that would bring benefits to all men.

24

The next day Guðmund traveled to Hof, where Teit Oddsson lived, because the priest Halldór Hallvarðsson was there as a guest. Guðmund spent a long time trying to persuade Halldór to release Guðmund from the responsibility of the episcopacy by undertaking it himself. Halldór refused to be convinced and pointed out that he was both too old and too unsuitable for the position; he was firmly convinced that Guðmund could in no way excuse himself from accepting:

"It is the will of God and men that you should be bishop. And I will support you with my prayers and with all the assistance that I can give you."

From Hof, Guðmund traveled north to Öxarfjörð via Möðrudalsheið; they ran into bad weather and a snowstorm so that the party was scattered until Guðmund came to and realized that they had gone astray. He was the first to make the house with two deacons, Sturla Bárðarson and Lambkár Þorgilsson, but the others arrived much later.

Continuing north they reached Grenjaðarstaðir, the home of Eyjólf Hallsson. Guðmund tried to persuade Eyjólf to consider accepting the office of bishop. Eyjólf declared that he was not interested and assured Guðmund that the men of Skagafjörð and Eyjafjörð wished for no one but Guðmund.

They journeyed north, arriving at Michaelmas[48] at Háls, the home of Ögmund Þorvarðsson who asked Guðmund if it was true that he was excusing himself from becoming bishop. Guðmund said it was true.

"But what is your reason?" asked Ögmund, and he replied:

"Because I believe that this office will bring with it many troubles when one has to deal with the disobedience and jealousy

of many powerful men. Cousin, would you yourself obey us if we were to interfere with your own way of life?"

Ögmund answered: "For whose misconduct should you be more responsible than for mine? Yet even though I am disobedient to you, I should be much more reluctant to obey any other man, and I should help you as usual if you had to deal with other men. It is pointless for you to think of withdrawing, because you must follow in the footsteps of Bishop Ambrose—as with him, your childhood games were a clear prophecy that you should become a bishop. All his protestations did not prevent him becoming a bishop, nor will yours, for we will have no other bishop than you."

After this Guðmund continued west to his home at Viðimýr, arriving on the Winter Nights, and his arrival was received with great jubilation.

25

On Saturday Þorvarð Þorgeirsson held a private talk with Guðmund; he asked if it was true that he was determined to refuse consecration as bishop and so refuse to accept the judgment of himself and other men of foresight. Guðmund said it was true.

Þorvarð answered: "I am convinced that I have to guide your affairs and that I must decide."

Guðmund replied: "Is there any good reason why I am not able to decide for myself?"

Then Þorvarð said: "Nephew, you know very well that I am the head of our family, as my father was before me. Your father, and all my other kinsmen, have submitted to my judgment, and I now advise you to do the same. After all, you will become the head of this family after my day."

Guðmund retorted: "You never offered me the chance to inherit my patrimony and you showed me little respect here except to beat me into studying my books—I believe that even now you are offering me a position of great difficulty, not one of honor, and to that I cannot submit."

Þorvarð then said: "Whenever before have I heard of any one refusing such an honor? Anyhow, it's pointless, because you must become bishop as my dreams have foretold."

"And what have you dreamed?" asked Guðmund.

"I dreamed that I was trying to enter a house, so huge and tall, that I had never seen its like before, and with a doorway proportionately large. And when my head had passed into the porch, I found that my shoulders stuck fast and I could go no further. I interpret my dream in this way: your fame and reputation will so increase that no one in the whole of Christendom will be able to conceive of such a reputation as yours will become. Then I had a second dream; that I arrived north in Niðarós in the hall of King Óláf, who was sitting on his throne with a full court assembled around him. I thought that he stood up opposite me, stretched out his arms and greeted me, saying: 'Welcome and peace to you, Þorvarð, for you will be honored throughout the whole of Scandinavia.' I am convinced that these dreams refer to you: it is the will of God that you should be consecrated in the hall of King Óláf,—that is, in the Christ Church,[49] where you shall be consecrated as bishop,—so this will come to pass, whether you wish it or no."

After this they parted and Þorvarð reported this conversation to Kolbein Tumason who then met Guðmund and informed him of the meeting held at Vellir on the Feast of St. Egidíus:

"Present at the meeting were the Abbots of Þingeyrar and Þverá, as well as Gizur Hallsson, Guðmund dýri, and a large number of local people. The names of you and Magnús Gizurarson were proposed. Gizur made a strong case for his own son and claimed both that he had the strongest backing and that he had had more experience of handling estates and affairs than you. At this point I made it known that I would be happy with either candidate. Then Hjálm Ásbjarnarson and Haf and many others said quite firmly that they were not disposed to see anyone elected from another part of the country—and the upshot was that everyone took this point, without a single opposing voice, and we unanimously agreed to elect you. So now you have been truly elected by the choice of God and men and we now expect that you will accede to the will both of God and of us and not attempt to escape from it."

Guðmund answered: "I now wish to make certain that the

other people in this diocese think the same as you do, because I believe that this election carries with it a severe responsibility and it is for this reason that I am reluctant to agree to your choice."

26

On Sunday a meeting was called at Viðimýr to which all the men in that district came; they debated the whole question of the election afresh and they reached the same conclusion as before. Guðmund the priest was then called before them and Kolbein said to him that they beseeched him to agree and to accept the responsibility for which they had elected him, namely, that he should be their bishop. Then when Guðmund could see that Kolbein was so set that he would not accept any alternative, because he (Kolbein) believed that Guðmund would be the easiest candidate to control, then he gave his reply:

"I would prefer to place myself in the mercy of God and agree to accept this heavy burden than to be responsible for the consequences if no bishop were to be elected."

Kolbein answered: "You have spoken with most blessed wisdom," and they all congratulated him once more and that evening the electors returned to their homes.

That evening Guðmund was placed in a special seat of honor while Kolbein himself served him with food and spread a cloth before him on the table. Because the cloth had been found in haste, it was so badly torn that Kolbein commented on the fact:

"Pardon our familiarity in placing such a poor cloth on the table before you; you merit greater consideration than this."

Guðmund said: "Don't apologize for the cloth. It is a good emblem of my episcopate—that, too, will be torn apart like this linen."

Kolbein was silent, offering no reply. The next morning Kolbein and Þorvarð made ready to accompany the Bishop-elect and his personal clerks on their journey to Hólar. As they set out Kolbein gave him a mature ox and said that this was only the first of many presents to follow. Guðmund thanked him graciously. They set out later in the day for Hólar and arrived at the see during the

evening before the Feast of the Virgins of Cologne. They came out to meet the Bishop-elect in procession.

Once they had settled in, Kolbein took control of the establishment and managed all the finances without permission from the Bishop-elect. Kyrgi-Björn[50] was already at Hólar, but, before their party arrived, the deacon, Lambkár, had always attended to Kolbein's correspondence (and affairs) whenever he was at home. After Kolbein came to Hólar, Lambkár was taken off all secretarial duties and Kyrgi-Björn took over all letter-writing instead and became Kolbein's closest associate. Immediately Björn showed enmity towards the Bishop-elect because he fancied that Guðmund had not recognized his proper worth. This was a clear and immediate indication of Björn's later conduct, because this jealous enmity was of his own creation and grew stronger the more it fed in his heart.

During the winter it became clear that Kolbein was in complete control and the Bishop-elect's wishes were so much ignored that he could not bring his own kin[51] to live at Hólar; instead, he established them at a farm in Kálfsstaðir with the gifts he had received during his tours the previous summer. In contrast, Kolbein awarded himself authority to take up residence at the see with six of his own followers. Again, the Bishop-elect desired, and caused, food to be given to the poor twice daily, but Kolbein drove them into a lodging-house and allowed them but one meal.

Once Yule was over, the steward, Þórarin, held an interview with the Bishop-elect on the Eve of Epiphany[52] and said: "You show no curiosity about the finances that are in my charge."

Guðmund replied: "I see no point in meddling in matters over which I have no control."

Þórarin continued: "Even so, I must tell you the state of things. I made the same financial provision for the Christmas festivities this year as in past years. In previous years things have got pretty tight by Christmas, but this year we have managed to carry on for a week longer although we have had more visitors than ever before."

"This shows," said Guðmund, "that the Blessed Virgin Mary thinks better of our hospitality than Kolbein does."

Kolbein sat near and said nothing; and then the steward left them. Then a herdsman came in and told how the cattle fodder in his charge had never lasted as long as it had this year. The Bishop-elect gave the same answer:

"Who can tell, unless Mary thinks more highly of our generosity than Kolbein does."

27

After Yule the Bishop sent Þórð Vermundarson to request Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson to meet him in Miðfjörð because Guðmund wished to ask Hrafn to accompany him on his journey to Norway. When the time for their meeting approached, the Bishop-elect made ready to leave Hólar, and, as he was about to enter his sleigh, Kolbein came up and spoke to him:

"Now I wish that we should lay aside the enmity that has been between us during the winter; there was no point in it and it would be as well if neither of us tried to blame the other."

The Bishop-elect replied: "I don't think I have anything to apologize for. If you have acted in the same way then all is well, if not, surely you yourself are solely to blame."

Kolbein said: "No one is really responsible for everything. This is the way things go in most things. And it is possible that we have carried the greater share of blame. I wish now to ask your forgiveness. We, too, will forgive you if you have sometimes overstepped the mark."

Guðmund then said: "It is pleasant to hear fair words, for it now seems that we are both a little unconscious of what we do, for I am quite unaware of any kind of encroachment that I have perpetrated on your prerogative here during the winter, simply because I have never had the opportunity to control anything."

He then traveled to the western districts and stayed at Þingeyrar where there was a wise and virtuous nun, an anchoress called Úlfrún. She was the mother of the priest Símon mikli, and she followed the rule of seclusion so strictly that she would not see her son when he visited her. She informed the Bishop-elect that the Virgin Mary both wished that he should become a bishop, "and you must not decline this office if you desire to perform

God's will, which you must do, because it has already been determined."

Guðmund was strongly influenced by this statement and placed implicit trust in it.

After this he continued west into Miðfjörð and arrived on the appointed day at Staðarbakki; the same evening Hrafn Steinbjarnarson arrived there from the western fjords as he had promised. On Sunday the Bishop-elect preached a long and noteworthy sermon and proclaimed that if there was any man there present who might know of anyone who was prepared to accept the onerous responsibility which was intended for him, or if there was anyone who wished that Guðmund should draw back from it, "then I will gladly give it up, if this may be done with the consent of the people."

But there was no one present who believed in the existence of any such opponent and at this meeting it was decided that Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson should accompany the Bishop-elect on his journey to Norway for his consecration as bishop. Both parties then left, the Bishop-elect proceeding north to Hólar and Hrafn west to the fjord where he lived.

28

During the winter the Bishop-elect sent a messenger east to Svínafel with the following letter:

"Greetings from God and from Guðmund, now called Bishop-elect, to Sigurð and Þuríð.

"God has given many signs that we should fulfill the promise that we made to you, that we would obtain an estate for you. Now I am in need of your assistance because I have accepted a heavier responsibility than I feel capable of carrying. I now invite you both to take charge of my establishment and my financial affairs along with me, and come as quickly as you can because that will be best for my see and for all of us. *Valete.*"

Sigurð set out from the east after Yule and he met the Bishop-elect's party as they were returning home to the north from meeting Hrafn. Then Sigurð hurried on and arrived first at Hólar. When Guðmund arrived at Hólar, they discussed the precise

details of Sigurð's responsibility. Sigurð said that he did not want to take over control unless the responsibility for the see was legally transferred to him. The Bishop-elect was not ready to make a legal transfer but stated that he was prepared to give Sigurð responsibility for the supervision of the affairs of the see. Then far-sighted men, including Kolbein Tumason, Haf Brandsson, and numerous others, urged that it would be better for the Bishop-elect to transfer authority for the see's supervision to Sigurð than to risk Sigurð's withdrawal, because most men believed that the affairs of the see would be best served under the control of Sigurð and Þuríð. The final result was that Guðmund transferred the see's administration to Sigurð, but shared it equally with himself.

Afterwards Sigurð went to Skálaholt with the following letter from the Bishop-elect to Bishop Pál:

"To Bishop Pál, the greetings of God and of Guðmund the priest, who is now called Bishop-elect.

"I have accepted a greater burden of responsibility than I feel able to carry and I have neither received your counsel nor your permission, as I ought to have done. I now wish to ask you to consider the matter on God's behalf, as is your bounden duty, and to tell me your innermost thoughts. If you wish to select another man for this honor and responsibility, which I have unworthily agreed to accept, then I will gladly relinquish it and go away, because I am already quite aware that certain people already seem to think that they have spoken too soon in this matter. I have also appointed Sigurð Ormsson to share the administration of the see with me, because some people had doubts about my skill in financial matters. Now choose quickly either for or against me, as God will make it known to you, and send me a speedy reply. *Valete.*"

As soon as Sigurð brought this letter to Bishop Pál, he sent a man east to Sæmund at Oddi with the following letter:

"Bishop Pál sends God's greetings together with his own to his brother Sæmund.

"I have received a letter from the Bishop-elect asking me, if I wish, to choose another man as bishop. He declares that he is

quite ready to waive his election. He has appointed Sigurð Ormsson to administer his affairs because men had previously tended to suspect that his own handling of financial matters would not be over-prudent. I seem to deduce from his letter that he must intend to sail to Norway this summer, if he is not dissuaded from the election, because he asked me to decide quickly whether I wished to elect him or no. I now wish you to tell me how I should reply."

Sæmund sent the following reply:

"To Bishop Pál the greetings of God and of me, Sæmund.

"As you well knew, brother, Bishop-elect Guðmund was no friend of mine in our dispute with Sigurð. Nevertheless, he has been highly praised by others and it is likely that he has been chosen because it is the will of God. I learn, too, that it is an admirable choice for many reasons, both for his charitable goodness and austerity, as well as for his chastity, which is most important. And if a different view were presented, then you would certainly be relieving the men of the north of their direct responsibility for their own choice. This is my opinion—choose him rather than turn him down, because it is in no way clear that any other man would be likelier than he in the eyes of God, and therefore it is best to take a chance—because it is not clear that any one else could be found who would not be open to censure. These northerners made their choice without outside help. Whatever comes to pass now, they must bear the full responsibility for it."

This letter arrived at Skálaholt and the Bishop sent word to Þorvald Gizurason, and to Hall[53] and Magnús, his brothers, and to Sigurð Ormsson and they arranged a meeting. The Bishop explained to them that the election had been placed in his hands and that he had decided to support, and not to reject, Guðmund's election as bishop. They all pledged formal support for his decision. The Bishop and the others sent Ingimund Grímsson north with a letter to Bishop-elect Guðmund in the following terms:

"Bishop Pál sends God's greetings, and his own, to Bishop-elect Guðmund.

"God has chosen you as bishop, as do we, and you are truly

elected according to the law of God and of men as certainly as this can be done in our country. And now that God and virtuous men have laid this responsibility upon you, we deem it most necessary that we meet you as soon as possible because I discern from your letter that you intend to sail to Norway this summer, if it should happen that I supported your election: I am willing to meet you anywhere you please, but I should be grateful if you were to visit me here—though I should not insist on that—because I have many urgent matters for the Archbishop and it is because of these that I wish to meet you before you go abroad. *Valete.*"

The winter was over and, after Whitweek, the Bishop-elect journeyed south to meet Bishop Pál at Skálaholt and received the letters which he wished to send to the Archbishop. And then Guðmund returned home to Hólar.

Then Sigurð and Þuríð arrived from the east and made this agreement with the Bishop-elect, that their income should not be decreased because of the move, and they estimated the amount at two hundred hundreds. This sum included all kinds of goods, both cash and cattle. And this was agreed to.

29

Guðmund made ready for his voyage and packed all the goods he had been given as tithes. When he reached the ship, Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson also arrived from the west and he was fully equipped for the voyage according to their previous arrangement. Other members of the party were Tómas Ragnheiðarson, Ívar Jónsson, Grím munk, and Eyjólf Snorrason; in all there were fifteen Icelanders and they put to sea on the Sunday morning before *Divisio Apostolorum.*[54]

The Bishop-elect had sent Kollsvein Bjarnarson from the ship to look for some water casks north of the fjord[55] and, as he returned from there, the ship sailed away, leaving him stranded. At that moment three men rowed by—Narfi from Brekka was one of them—and they had come east from Flatey with a cargo of dried fish. Kollsvein told them about his problem and asked for their assistance.

"You are in a mess," said Narfi, "but it affects the Bishop-elect as well as you, so we shall certainly help you."

Immediately, they threw out their cargo, put Kollsvein and his water casks on board, and, using sail, rowed down the fjord. The wind freshened and the merchant ship drew away from them. When Narfi saw Guðmund's ship pulling ahead, he said:

"How long must we row after the merchant ship before our attempt to catch them will seem ridiculously miserable to you?"

Kollsvein answered: "To the mouth of the fjord where it joins the sea."

"That's fair," said Narfi, "we'll give you that."

When the merchant ship reached Hrísey, the Bishop-elect said:

"Lower the sail, for I will not sail away from the man I left on shore, and I intend to celebrate Mass today on this island."

The Norwegian sailors said that it was against all common sense not to take advantage of such a favorable wind.

Guðmund replied that they would have to pay dearly for this, "for God will cause us to have much longer delays than this before our journey is over."

Seeing his displeasure, they reefed the sail and cast anchor. The Bishop-elect then went ashore and celebrated Mass. There was now no need for Narfi's crew to row any further and Kollsvein boarded the merchant ship.

The following morning they had a favorable wind, but when they tried to weigh anchor, it stuck fast. One after the other, they tried everything they knew, but failed to move it. So they told the Bishop-elect. He came forward, made the sign of the cross over it, and saying, "My Lord, free this anchor," he caught hold of the cable. The anchor came free, they hoisted sail and made Grímsey where they were becalmed for a week, until they had a good wind and sailed north along Gnúpar until they met a headwind that blew them before it as far west as Skagi. Then they were able to control their course somewhat and with difficulty they made their way a second time north along Langanes. Then they came up against a second headwind which blew them west out into the open sea.

One night a woman on board their ship dreamed that a man

in bishop's vestments walked along the ship to where the Bishop-elect was sleeping and made the sign of the cross over him. She seemed to recognize him as Bishop Jón. The next day the Bishop-elect said to them:

"I advise you to raise sail and go west around the coast because the winds are blowing from the northeast and we shall never make it around the north coast."

They followed his plan and sailed along the west coast, passing the West Fjords, and then south of Snæfellsnes and south of Reykjanes and then past Eyjafjöl. There they met northeasterly winds which blew them south into the open sea until they came in sight of the Hebrides and were able to identify the islands called Hirtir.[56] It was there that they heard of the death of King Sverri. They were then carried south into the Irish Sea, along the coast of Ireland, where they encountered severe storms and could hear the roar of breakers all around them. The Bishop-elect advised that everyone should make confession, that all the clergy should shave their tonsures and that men should make their vows (for deliverance from peril). His instructions were then followed exactly. They vowed to give an ell (of wadmal) from every bundle aboard, also to send one man on a pilgrimage to Rome and, in addition, vowed that each man should donate four ounces of wax to their various churches.[57] Immediately the bad weather eased up and they were given a favorable wind to Norway.

The Bishop-elect paid a visit to King Hákon[58] in Bergen and the king gave him a warm welcome. After this he sailed north to Niðarós where Archbishop Eirík consecrated him bishop.

The Saga of Guðmund dýri

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1

Guðmund Eyjólfsson lived at a farm called Helgastaðir in the district of Reykjadal. He was wealthy, with a great deal of money, and he had many friends, but many people saw he was avaricious. His son, Teit, was an admirable, much loved young man. Guðmund had two brothers, Halldór and Björn, both much poorer than Guðmund, and they had farms in the same valley. At that time there were many outstanding men in that district. (Sigurð Styrkársson the Lawspeaker lived at Fellsmúli and Grenjaðarstaðir was the home of Eyjólf, the son of Lawspeaker Hall Hrafnsson, grandson of Lawspeaker Úlfheðin and great grandson of Lawspeaker Gunnar.[1] Sigríð, the daughter of Hall Hrafnsson, was the mother of Guðlaug who was the mother of Ketil Þorláksson and the grandmother of the sons of Narfi.)

When Teit grew up, a suitable match was arranged for him. A farmer, named Þórólf Sigmundarson, lived at a farm called Möðrufel in Eyjafjörð. He was a substantial farmer, the grandson of Hafliði Másson, and his wife was Steinun the daughter of Þorstein ranglát. They had three sons who have nothing to do with this saga; their only daughter was Otkatla—a handsome young woman, capable and well disposed. Her hand in marriage was sought on behalf of Teit and it was considered a well-balanced match: she came of a better family, but he had greater wealth,[2] and they were very fond of each other. They were married and she came to his home and immediately took charge of the housekeeping because, since Guðmund's wife had died, the household had been supervised by a series of house servants. The new situation was to everyone's taste. Much sooner than one could have expected, Guðmund made over the farm and all his

possessions to the young couple. He retained for himself enough for a reasonable manner of life and with this he betook himself to Þverá and became a monk. (This was when the abbot was Hall Hrafnsson.)

Once Guðmund had left, Teit's affairs altered rapidly. One winter three ships were beached for the winter in Eyjafjörð, during a time of food shortage. Kolbein Tumason was the chieftain in Skagafjörð. He would not allow the farmers to charge less in wintering fees than he prescribed and he claimed a share of it. The Norwegian merchants thought these charges too high and decided not to lodge further west than the heath separating them from Skagafjörð. Teit Guðmundarson put up three Norwegians: one was Grím, nicknamed rauð, the other two were called Erling and Hrafn. (This was the winter in which farms were destroyed by fire at Möðruvellir in Eyjafjörð, at Bakki in Miðfjörð, and in many other places.) Teit got on extremely well with his winter guests and was eager to sail off with them because he had never been away from Iceland. In the spring he sailed away with them. Many Icelanders went abroad that spring: one was Teit, who had farms in Keldur and Gunnarsholt and had married Vilborg, the daughter of Gizur Hallsson; others included Þorgeir, the son of Bishop Brand, and a man called Gunnar from Auðkúla. The previous summer Þorvarð Ásgrímsson auðgi had also sailed to Norway. None of these ever returned and there wasn't one of these men who was not considered superior in every way to those who stayed behind in their respective districts.

In those days it was customary for Bishop Brand to make a visitation throughout his see each summer and to stay at alternative churches. This summer he was put up at the house of Teit in Helgastaðir, and Otkatla had invited some of her friends and relations: Þórólf her father, Óláf Þorsteinsson her uncle, and Eyjólf Hallsson who had married Otkatla's cousin, Guðrún the daughter of Óláf. During the day of the Bishop's visit, a remarkable thing happened: as the women were serving the breakfast, Otkatla thought that on two or three occasions she could see her husband, Teit, sitting with the other men; taking a closer look she could see no one who resembled him at all and because of

this she was unable to assist with serving the meal. But before the visitors left, Otkatla called together her father and their closest friends and declared that she wished to make legal arrangements for a division of her property from that of Teit. They were amazed at this because she and Teit had lived happily while they were together. But when she informed them of her vision, they were more ready to accede to her request. She was to have her dowry[3] and her settlement and it was clearly decided how her share was to be paid either in land or in cash. She also made it clear that there would be no division, either of their goods or of their good marital relationship, if Teit her husband were to return.

That same summer, when the ships came in, they brought reports of Teit's death abroad during the spring in Norway. They had no children. There was a considerable debate as to who might be Teit's heir and there seemed to be no clear-cut answer. Many men argued that his father was his heir and should inherit his estate, but Guðmund's brothers, Björn and Halldór, argued that Guðmund could neither inherit the money nor wish to do so, because he was a monk. As a result the entire district was involved in the debate and many men were involved on either side. Eyjólf Hallsson let it be known that he supported Guðmund's cause, for Eyjólf had two sons and he wished to set them up in establishments of their own. He rode to Þverá and made a bargain with Guðmund for the lands and the inheritance, subsequently buying it for a little over half its market value with the proviso that Eyjólf should be answerable for the transaction in the case of legal dispute. When Halldór and Björn heard the news they were very angry, believing the property to be theirs, and swore that Eyjólf would not benefit from his bargain when they themselves were in dire need.

Eyjólf had bought the property between Yule and Easter. During Easter Week, the two brothers made a journey inland to Hörgárdal in Eyjafjörð on a visit to their respective goðorðs men in order to explain their difficulties and to ask for their support. (One of them was a member of the Þing district presided over by Þorvarð Þorgeirsson who lived at Möðruvellir in Hörgárdal;

the other owed allegiance to Önund Þorkelsson of Laugaland.) The result of their visits was that each brother made over his claim to his goði, "whosoever might claim that share for himself," and then they returned home. This news was soon spread around. In the spring, after Easter, Otkatla disposed of her land and took her share of the property that had been agreed upon the previous summer; afterwards she moved away from Helgastaðir with all her possessions and went inland to her father at Möðrufel. She plays no further part in this saga.

2

Then the two chieftains, Þorvarð and Önund, arranged a meeting at which it was decided that they should make common cause in this dispute; they traveled north to Reykjadal with almost fifty men and established themselves in the farm at Helgastaðir. Eyjólf was told and he summoned together his supporters. He was joined by his neighbor, Sigurð Styrkársson, by his own brothers, Ísleif and Ásbjörn, and by Kleppjárn Klængsson who had married Sigurð's daughter, Ingiríð. Among the rest of Eyjólf's party were Hjálm Ásbjarnarson from Vestrhóp, Ásgrím Gilsson from Vatnsdal (who had married Járngerð, Eyjólf's niece), and Má Guðmundarson, a close relation of Eyjólf, who had married Helga, the daughter of Snorri Kálfsson. Einar Hallsson from Möðruvellir had joined Önund's party because they shared a goðorð and were closely related. Both sides in the dispute were now firmly entrenched in their positions with crowds of supporters.

Eyjólf marched to Helgastaðir but no agreement could be reached between them because each side laid claim to everything that was under dispute and there was no possibility of a compromise solution because neither party would relinquish one jot of his claim. Consequently Eyjólf decided to seek legal redress and publicly summoned Önund for unlawful seizure of property that, he claimed, belonged to himself. In reply, Þorvarð summoned Má Guðmundarson; thereafter charges were brought against Hámund and Vigfús (two sons of Önund) and against a man called Valgarð. All these lawsuits were to be brought before the Vaðla-Þing.[4]

3

There was a certain Guðmund Þorvaldsson, nicknamed Guðmund dýri, who lived in Öxnaðal at a farm called Bakki. He was a brother to Ásgrím, the father of Þorvarð auðgi and of Álfheið, the wife of Gizur Hallsson, and of Vigdís, the wife of Forni Söxólfsson—from whom the family called "Fornungar" are descended. On his mother's side Guðmund dýri was related to Þórð Þórisson of Laufás. Guðmund handled the goðorð that belonged to his brother Ásgrím and to Þorvarð auðgi and he supported neither party in the dispute over Helgastaðir. He collected a large band of his own Þingmen and many others and attended the Spring Alþing. When the legal session was convened, it was impossible to find an acceptable solution because neither party would waive any portion of its claim and each asserted his entitlement to a full share of the property under dispute.

Þorvarð and Önund stated that they would do battle for their claim and refused to bring forward any legal defense. Guðmund intervened between the contenders with his own band of supporters with the result that there was no fight and no legal judgment was given. The plaintiffs then gave notice that they would bring the lawsuit before the Alþing, because no judgment had been made at the Spring-leet court. After this, the Alþing was terminated.

Preparations were now in hand for the Alþing and when the time came neither Þorvarð nor Önund attended; instead Einar Hallsson went there in charge of Önund's goðorð while Þorvarð deputed his goðorð to his kinsman, Snorri Grímsson. In this way Önund and Þorvarð were unable to answer the charge against them without conceding a jot of their claim and they made it clear that they would put things straight when any attempt was made to carry out a legal decision at the place of dispute.

Óláf Þorsteinsson gave Kleppjárn this choice, either to go to the Þing and support Eyjólf or to stay at home and keep a watch on events in the locality. Kleppjárn went to the Þing, leaving Óláf behind. However, Önund and Þorvarð kept their men at home during the Alþing, defending their camp, so that no one came to any harm. When men returned from the Alþing, they

brought news that Önund and Þorvarð had been declared legal outlaws. After this both sides took up strong positions with a large number of supporters.

When the time approached for holding the court of execution of the legal decision of outlawry, large numbers of men assembled from far and wide. From the fjords in the east came Þorvarð's cousin, Teit Oddsson, to lend him his support. At this time the authority over Skagafjörð was invested in Sigurð Ormsson along with Þuríð, the daughter of Gizur, who had married Tumi Kolbeinsson. Kolbein Tumason had gone to Norway, leaving Sigurð in full charge of his legal responsibilities. Guðmund dýri had dispatched a messenger to Sigurð asking for his support and Sigurð had sent him forty soldiers, well equipped with arms. On the day in which the court of execution was to be held, Guðmund set out with a hundred and fifty men and, marching across the ridge between Hörgárdal and Kræklingahlíð, he came up against Eyjólf's troops.

Two courts of execution were to be held, the one at Möðruvellir and the other at Laugaland. The troops of Önund and Þorvarð were now marching against those of Eyjólf. Once Guðmund dýri had halted Eyjólf's force, he turned against those of Önund and Þorvarð and forced them to halt. He then maintained this central position, and he claimed the legal right to promulgate the court of execution on the spot where his forces had been halted because they were unable to proceed any further. Önund and Þorvarð asserted that if this were done, they would immediately join battle with Eyjólf. Guðmund then stepped between both sides and said that he would turn his own forces against the side that would not obey his wishes. The result was that there was no fighting, neither did the court of execution take place. When the afternoon came, men rode away, because at that time the law stated that the court of execution sentence must be completed while the sun was in the south.[5] The contending parties returned to their respective camps, while those who came from afar returned to their own localities.

Both sides continued to camp at full strength. Helgastaðir was much better equipped to deal with visitors and, because the

troops included many landless men and sturdy beggars, they knew how to fend for themselves when the estate could not supply them. Eyjólf's troops lived on a whale and eggs and anything else that was edible and that belonged to Eyjólf himself. When supplies grew short at Helgastaðir, they began to steal and they robbed Þorgeir Hlífarson, living at a farm called Nes. They also pillaged Hall Ísleifsson and failed to capture him because he managed to escape through a window-slit in one of his outbuildings and rode off on one of their horses while they were stealing his food and cattle. As they were riding home from this foray, they baited their horses in the home-meadow at Grenjaðarstaðir and urged Eyjólf's men to come down from their earth works, because both sides had fortified their farms. Ísleif Hallsson wished to go down and fight with them, but his own men held him back. After this, Þorvarð and Önund's men returned to Helgastaðir with their plunder.

Eyjólf reckoned that his force was too small and there were no available men in that neighborhood. Because of this Ísleif rode west to Skagafjörð to find reinforcements where he had an estate at Geldingaholt. Arriving there he called on Grím Snorrason who lived at Hof, towards the coast from Hjaltadal. Grím had married Þorvarð's sister Þorný, and had not joined forces with them at the camp. He made preparations for the journey and rode to meet Guðmund dýri at Bakki. Guðmund came with him from Bakki—together they had fifty men—and, traveling north through Reykjadal to Helgastaðir and Grenjaðarstaðir, they sought both parties in order to find a peaceful settlement. They asserted that they would no longer tolerate the maintenance of these two camps with the consequent raids and disturbances between them. Grím was a wise and resourceful man, and he and Guðmund were able to find an acceptable peace formula which was accompanied by an offer of marriage. Grím brought it about that Klæng, the son of Kleppjárn, asked for the hand of Guðrún, the daughter of Þorvarð Þorgeirsson. The two matters were agreed to at the same time, the peace settlement and the betrothal; nor were any fines or penalties leveled against anyone, because all charges were dropped. Neither of the contestants ac-

quired the lands that were in dispute, and as for the livestock, that had all been used up. The lands were given to the father and son, Klæng and Kleppjárn. It seemed to Þorvarð that the land would eventually pass to him because of the tie of kinship. It was agreed that the new owners should pay the value for the land to the rightful owners. Settlements were also made for the robberies that had taken place; peace was now established, the fortifications were broken up, and those who had assisted in the peace-making were given lodgings and provisions. After this they all dispersed and neither of the contending parties in these disputes derived any renown from them—it all redounded to Guðmund's credit. The disputes were settled and over before Ísleif returned and Eyjólf now had no need of extra men; but winter provisions and lodgings were promised to all those men who had been collected from their summer quarters. (The brothers, Ísleif and Eyjólf, agreed to this.) Afterwards Ísleif fulfilled this promise: he opened up Eyjólf's whale-storage pits[6] and gave each men three loads of whale meat which they carried away with them to their homes.

The wedding took place in the autumn and the feast was held at Möðruvellir. Immediately afterwards Guðrún went to live with Klæng at Hrafnagil. Eyjólf's brother, Ásbjörn Hallsson, was then without a farm. He took over Helgastaðir from Klæng and Kleppjárn, because they found the upkeep too expensive for them and for this reason they sold the land to Ásbjörn. When Þorvarð heard the news he was displeased that the land had passed into the hands of a son of Hall. But Klæng and Kleppjárn maintained that they had as much right to sell this property as anything else that belonged to them. In this way Ásbjörn settled in at Helgastaðir, but it was Guðmund dýri who gained the greatest credit from these disputes.

4

Björn Gestsson lived in Óláfsfjörð at a farm called Sand and he was a follower and Þingman of Önund. He was powerfully built but very harsh in his handling of men and of financial

matters and he often attracted men who were not settled in fixed jobs. The previous summer he had supported Önund throughout the dispute and did not return to his own farm until the various disputes had been concluded. Consequently little of his own farm work had been done and he was left with many dependents and little provision for them. That winter there were ugly rumors in the locality, thefts and house-breakings around Óláfsfjörð and Fljót, and it was common knowledge that the evil-doers were from the farms belonging to Björn.

The man in charge of this area was Jón Ketilsson, a brother of Ásgrím the skáld. Jón had a farm at the settlement called Holt but he was on a visit to Bishop Brand at Hólar. Two farmers from Fljót—Má Runólfsson and Þorvarð Sunnólfsson—traveled inland to Hólar, met Jón, and told him of their problems. Jón asked Bishop Brand for his advice and the Bishop declared that most men believed that the locality should be cleaned up and those men arrested who had proved such hardened miscreants, that is, those who hung around Björn. After this conversation, Jón made his way to Fljót with Þorvarð and Má and, after collecting a band of nearly fifty men from the area, he marched towards Óláfsfjörð and arrived at Sand. Björn was in a rowboat fishing, so they seized two boats and rowed out after him and met him at sea. He had taken this precaution against being captured and he had a companion with him called Eyjólf. However, they overtook Björn, tied him up on board and so brought him back to land. One of the evil-doers—Prest-Valdi Másson—had been captured redhanded previously by the men from Fljót and they had him with them. To save his own life, he was told to kill Björn and he made a horrible job of it. Afterwards they buried Björn.

When Önund heard of Björn's death he was very offended by it, because he set great store by those whom he thought his supporters though he was pretty severe towards other men. Önund claimed full legal compensation for the murder of Björn because he was not in any illegal place (or engaged in any illegal acts) when they arrested him.

The winter passed and Lent drew near. On the Wednesday

of the Lenten Ember week,[7] a man (called Sölvi Þórarinsson) came into Fljót and he stayed at the farm at Gil which belonged to Þorvarð Bjarnarson, nicknamed Skerja-Björn. Actually Þorvarð had taken part in the killing of Björn, and Sölvi decided to leave the place and not stay there because he knew he was outnumbered. Eventually he came to a sheep-fold in Holt, belonging to Jón, and he stayed there that afternoon. The shepherd was a fellow called Glúm and when he returned to the fold that evening, Sölvi killed him.

Throughout the night Sölvi ran up into Svarfaðardal, where his feet were badly frost-bitten, and then further inland from Svarfaðardal towards Árskógsströnd. He was closely pursued from house to house until he arrived safely at Önund's in Laugaland and stayed there.

During the spring Önund had sworn that he would travel out to Fljót and bring a charge against those who had shared in Björn's death, because they were all men of substance and it was expected that the decision would be a profitable one for Önund. The brothers Jón and Ásgrím had charge of the prosecution for Glúm's murder, and the outcome of that case would depend entirely upon whether Glúm had been a legal outlaw or not (when he was killed by Sölvi). The men from Fljót could see that they would never gain their full legal rights in lawsuits against Önund unless they enjoyed the support of other men, and they sought a meeting with Bishop Brand and asked his advice. The Bishop pointed out that in all the important and difficult lawsuits concluded at the Alþing the previous summer it was Guðmund dýri whose counsel had been followed in every case; he advised them to meet Guðmund and to win him to their side.

The brothers Jón and Ásgrím called on Guðmund dýri and asked him to come into the case on their side; but he said that he was in no way involved because his family links with either side were too remote. They could now see that they could not get his support for their lawsuit. Then they transferred to Guðmund the goðorð over the men of Fljót—this was a populous and well organized district—and Guðmund accepted their offer.

As a result of this transfer, all those who were involved in these disputes became his Þingmen. A peace settlement meeting was arranged between Guðmund and Önund and this lawsuit was settled. The verdict was entrusted to two priests, Hall Gunnarsson from Möðruvellir and Björn Steinmóðarson from Öxnahól: in their verdict they balanced equally the murder of Glúm against the killing of Björn. They also said that one would have expected a heavy fine for Björn's murder because so many men were involved in it, but they believed that he wasn't worth any compensation. The final result was that they parted without any payment on either side.

5

Guðrún, the daughter of Þórð, lived on a farm in the settlement called Arnarnes, which was situated closer to Galmansströnd away from Hörgárdal. She was a young lady of great beauty and graciousness and she owned the land and the farm, having inherited it from her father. She was considered the most eligible match among the women of her rank and birth. Her hand in marriage was sought by Símon Þorvarðsson—nicknamed kamphund: Símon was a popular young man who was generally reckoned to be a suitable match for her. After the wedding Símon set up house with her in her farm. They didn't get on with each other very well and it was soon evident that Guðrún spent long periods away from home. Símon had the gentlest of easy-going tempers. They lived together in this way for two years and during the second winter their relationship improved and she spent her time at home. They were short of Lenten fare[8] and, as Lent approached, she advised him to try to get supplies over at Siglunes where his father lived. He set off, sailing out along the fjord, and struck the rock called Svarthöfðastein. Símon and two of his servants were drowned and Guðrún was left a widow.

That same summer her hand was sought by Hrafn Brandsson, from the west in Skagafjörð and the district controlled by Grím Snorrason, who strongly supported Hrafn's suit. At this time

Þorvarð kamphund Þorgeirsson was handling her affairs and, between them, the father and daughter-in-law agreed to Guðrún's betrothal to Hrafn. Their marriage feast was held at Grím's house at Hof and it was common gossip that on the first night, when Hrafn was brought into her bridal chamber by the groomsmen,[9] she rushed away from the bed. After this they returned north to her farm in Arnarnes where Hrafn took charge of the estate. Bud Guðrún still couldn't hit things off with her husband and during the summer she rode away west to Hof where Grím was happy to receive her, and she stayed there for some time. After a time she discovered that Grím intended to take her back to Eyjafjörð on his ship. This was not her idea at all, so she got away by stealth and leaving her transport-sleigh behind. She stopped nowhere on the way until she arrived at the home of Þorvarð kamphund in great distress, weeping and asserting that she had loved none but Símon. Þorvarð was happy to take her in and she stayed there for some time.

Each summer it was Þorvarð's custom to load ferry-boats with Lenten fare and to transport them around the locality in order to sell the food to the farmers. On one such trip he was sailing up along the fjord accompanied by Guðrún. He made for Gásar harbor where a merchant ship was berthed. Þorvarð pitched his tent there and Guðrún shared the tent with him. There were some men in the harbor whom we have not mentioned before. Þórð Þórarinsson from Laufás and his three sons, Hákon, Hildibrand, and Dagstygg. Although Hákon and Guðrún had often seen each other, it happened one day that they met and had a long conversation; after this Hákon came daily to talk with her as long as they stayed at this harbor. When Þorvarð had concluded his necessary bargains, he got his ship ready and sailed off with Guðrún. When the ship reached Arnarnes, he put Guðrún ashore so that she could return to her house and her domestic responsibilities. He then sailed home and he has no more to do with this saga.

After this Hákon paid frequent visits to Arnarnes and continued them right throughout the winter. Until, one day, Guðrún spoke to Hákon and told him that his visits were displeasing

to her as long as Hrafn was alive, "but afterwards you can do as you think best."

Another day, Hákon and his brother Hildibrand were sitting on the cross-bench on the raised daïs with Guðrún between them; they were talking in quiet tones while Hrafn sat on a bench working at a piece of carved wood, because he was a fine craftsman. Then the brothers got up and, as they went for the exit across the hall floor, Hákon lunged at Hrafn with a short-handed spear, wounding him in the breast. Hákon then attacked him a second time, with a glancing blow. The two brothers then left the hall. Hrafn picked up the axe that lay by his side and got to his feet, but Guðrún caught hold of him and begged him not to leave the hall.

He replied: "I couldn't get very far now, not even to show off a bit."

She asked if he was badly hurt. He answered: "The glancing blow was a mere flick but I fancy I'll smart for some time from this scratch low down on my chest."

He lay in his wounds for three nights and was given full medical attention, but he died and was buried at Möðruvellir.

6

The chieftains now began to grow weary of Guðmund dýri's continued success. He was surrounded by a large band of retainers; he had suspended the Vaðla-þing. It was not to be a mere preliminary court of sessions[10] but, according to him, a court like the Alþing where important legal disputes were settled. The chieftains were ready and eager to take up the lawsuit consequent on the murder of Hrafn. Guðmund was implicated in the case, because Hákon was his nephew, and he sought ways of dealing with the situation. He sent Valgarð west to Skagafjörð to meet Erlend Brandsson, a brother of Hrafn, who was legally responsible for following up the lawsuit for Hrafn's death and entitled to the compensation. Guðmund had been invited to stay with him and informed him that in this way Hrafn would receive the best compensation for his brother.

Erlend traveled from the west with Valgarð and two other priests,[11] Flosi Þóroddsson, who lived at Silfrastaðir, and Björn Óláfsson, who lived near Fel in Skagafjörð. They met Guðmund who was very glad to see them and who sent for Þorð and his sons. They came to Steinastaðir where Guðmund had a farm on the other side of the river. There Guðmund tried to come to terms in settlement of the case for Hrafn's manslaughter. Þórð made it clear that he was not prepared to pay any compensation for Hrafn unless Guðrún paid a half-share; he asserted that she had contrived (and planned) Hrafn's death. Guðmund had not wished this fact to be made public. They finally agreed that Guðmund and Flosi the priest should decide the amount of compensation. They awarded fifteen hundred standard ounces of silver and Guðmund paid the whole amount immediately. He also paid for two pieces of land to the west of the heath—the one called Hálfdanartungur and the other at Uppsalir, adjoining Silfrastaðir—and he gave gifts to all the participants when the meeting was over. In this way they established a complete truce for the death of Hrafn, and the chieftains knew nothing about it until the whole affair had been settled and done with. Later, Hákon married Guðrún and was very strict with her; he was determined to ensure that no lover of hers should ever bring about his death. Our story must now turn away from them.

7

There was a priest called Helgi Halldórsson who lived at a farm in Árskóg, inland from the coast towards Svarfaðardal. He lived with a woman called Herdís who had previously lived there with Brand Gellison who was killed in the church porch. Þórdís was the name of Helgi the priest's first wife and her mother was Þorgerð, the daughter of Þorgeir. Þorgerð lived at a place called Brattavöl, on the other side of the river in the district of Þorvaldsdal. She owned the property on which she lived and she wished to build a living-room extension to it. Helgi the priest helped supervise her estate and carted wood for her and other things that she needed.

In the district was a good craftsman named Ingimund without any fixed abode. He was given the job of building the extension and when he had finished it, he stayed there for the winter. After he had been there for some time, people began to say there was a lot of gossip about these two. No one really took it seriously, because most people thought the whole affair quite harmless. The arrangement was quite handy for his work and it suited her farm. And then, a stroke of ill luck for him as things turned out, he fell in love with another woman called Ásgerð who was staying at Kálfskin. Ingimund took to visiting her quite often and he and Þorgerð began to quarrel so that many times, after a dispute, she ran away from him and went down to Helgi at Árskóg.

On the next Friday after Yule, Ingimund paid a visit to Ásgerð and, on his return, he and Þorgerð had words and she dashed off during the evening down to Árskóg and spent the night there. Later that evening, as they were eating supper, Ingimund arrived and wanted to take Þorgerð back with him. She refused to go. Ingimund then asked Helgi if he would intervene and give his advice. Helgi said: "I have but one desire, that Þorgerð should at no time be forced to rush around between these two houses, for she is entirely free to do what she likes and to stay wherever she pleases." They both stayed the night there. There were not many people at home and they all slept in the large living room. When the men were asleep, Ingimund went outside. He was sleeping on the long bench, while the women slept on the cross-daïs. A lamp was burning in the hall, but it had been pulled up to the roof. As Ingimund reentered he made for Helgi the priest and struck him on the head with his axe; but he did not waken anyone as he reentered, so that no one recognized him. After this, Ingimund rushed away and arrived at Lower Árskóg and called on Sumarliði who lived there, and asked him to pray for the soul of Helgi the priest. He then continued his flight until he reached Hólar in the west and, meeting Bishop Brand, he told him about his trouble. However, the Bishop would not grant him absolution; he went on to say that he would undoubtedly lose his life but that was not the Bishop's responsibility, even

though he was not able to grant him absolution. Then the Bishop added that he would try to offer him what help he could. Ingimund had a cousin, one Sumarliði Ásmundarson, who lived at Tjörn in Svarfaðardal. The Bishop had Ingimund brought there and Sumarliði was glad to take him in.

Helgi was a kinsman of Þorvarð Þorgeirsson and a Þingman of Önund Þorkelsson. Now Þorvarð and Önund each placed a servant in Þorgerð's house to work around the farm and to make sure that Ingimund was not lurking about the place; if possible they were also to hunt him down. Önund's man was Þórarin ofláti; Þorvarð's servant was Jón Óláfsson, nicknamed skólpa.

When the spring approached, Ingimund no longer stayed with Sumarliði; he made a sudden move inland along the coast to meet Ásgerð and took her away up into Svarfaðardal to a farm called Reykjarhamar belonging to Eyjólf sópi. The people over in Hörgárdal soon discovered where Ásgerð had settled and eight men set off for Brattavellir, where they were joined by Þórarin and Jón. These ten reached Reykjarhamar early in the morning, were told that Ingimund was in one of the outbuildings and taunted him to come outside. He replied that the odds were stacked against him. At this Jón Óláfsson assured him that it was only Jón himself who was after his life and not the other nine. Ingimund then made a rush at the doorway with the intention of wounding Jón who was directly outside the porch. He got through the doorway, but as he came out into the open Jón slew him. They buried him in a snow drift before they left.

Eyjólf then rode away from the farm and, when he reached Tjörn, he told Sumarliði how things stood. Sumarliði assembled fifteen men and set off in pursuit of the invaders, but they did not meet and that was a good thing. Eventually a single settlement was made in which Ingimund's death, and the fine levied on Eyjólf for harboring a murderer, were set off against the murder of Helgi the priest. They got nothing out of Sumarliði who considered that he had received a substantial loss by Ingimund's death, because Ingimund had intended to pay Sumarliði handsomely for his passage to Norway.

That same spring proposals for a marriage had been made in

Svarfaðardal: Snorri Grímsson, from Hof to the west of Skagafjörð, had asked for the hand of Þuríð, a sister of Sumarliði who had pledged his word in favor of the marriage along with his sister and his mother. (Grím was a wise fellow, but very short, and he was nicknamed Ref-Grím.) Sumarliði now broke his promise and would not agree to the marriage; he said that he didn't fancy marrying his sister to a little fox. The marriage proposals were then broken off.

At this time, Guðmund Arason was parish priest at Vellir in Svarfaðardal. He gave orders that Ingimund's body should be taken up into Öxadal and buried there until people had returned from the Alþing, after which time Guðmund the priest had him disinterred and brought back to Vellir.[12]

8

Örnólf lived at a farm called Garðshorn, not far from Tjörn. His son, Brand, was a fine, young man of promise. The people of the two farms were not very friendly. One saint's day Brand went across to divine service on a horse that was not properly broken in; he let it go free during the Mass and it strayed into the home-pasture. When Brand came out and tried to catch the horse, he failed to mount it and the horse rushed around the meadow in wide circles causing more damage than before. Sumarliði rushed up with a cudgel and beat Brand and his horse so much that Brand could scarcely get away because of this ill-treatment, and was almost unable to walk. At this time, too, a merchant ship had put in at Gásar harbor and there was a great deal of trading. The anniversary of the church at Öxnahól fell on a Monday and the parishioners assembled on Sunday for the festival. Among the guests were Guðmund dýri and Önund and, although most of the horses were placed out to graze under a herdsman, Önund insisted that his horses should be tethered near to the settlement. The Monday was an ordinary weekday elsewhere and crowds had gathered around the ship, while those people who came the day before (for the church anniversary) were getting ready to depart. One of these was Flosi, a priest

at Silfrastaðir, and men were fixing the pack horses for him, among them Sumarliði from Tjörn. A man rode up to them on a young foal; he wore a gray cloak with a mask over his face and, as he dismounted, he lifted the mask. It was Brand Örnólfsson. He said that Sumarliði should now experience a little of the medicine he had administered the previous summer when he drove Brand out of his meadow. He struck Sumarliði between the shoulders with his broad axe and dealt him a severe wound. Þorstein Eyjólfsson (Urðastein) was standing by and he tried to hold Brand, but two other bystanders, Snorri Grímsson and Björn Óláfsson, caught hold of Þorstein and held him back. Another bystander was a priest, Þórodd Grímsson, a cousin to Brand and a follower of Önund; he quickly got Brand onto a horse and he rode away. Chase was given, but Brand was not captured.

This news was brought to Öxnahól as they were going to Evensong and, once the service was over, Önund's horses were saddled because he had now been informed that his own priest was involved in the affair, and so he rode to the ship. When Önund returned, Guðmund asked him for the latest news from the harbor. Önund reported that Sumarliði was in danger and that he was not expected to live long. Guðmund then asked about Brand and Önund reported that Kolbein Tumason had gone aboard the ship with a large crowd of his men, and it could be that Brand had been among them. After this Guðmund rode to the ship and spent the night there discussing all the contingencies that had arisen, because Sumarliði was his kinsman as well as his Þingman. Sumarliði survived for another twenty-four hours and, when he died, he was buried at Vellir in Svarfaðardal.

Björn Óláfsson accompanied Brand to Kolbein Tumason's home in Viðimýr and Kolbein had him conveyed east to Svínafel, where Sigurð Ormsson took him aboard his ship for Norway. Björn died making a pilgrimage to Rome.

The following spring Guðmund brought an action against Brand for the slaying of Sumarliði, and against Snorri Grímsson for conspiracy and for aiding and abetting the murderer, and against both Björn Óláfsson and Þorodd the priest for aiding

and abetting Brand. All these disputes were brought to the General Assembly, where Önund gave Guðmund his full support, and all the lawsuits were settled except the one for the death of Sumarliði. No one spoke in defense of Brand and he was declared an outlaw. Snorri paid a fine of twelve hundred and was forced to leave Skagafjörð; he moved south to Oddi. Björn paid six hundred and was declared an outlaw from his own district. Þórodd the priest paid three hundred, but was allowed to live where he pleased.

9

Many important events took place simultaneously but they can only be related one at a time. There were proposals for a marriage in Hörgárdal when Þorfinn Önundarson asked for the hand of Ingibjörg, the daughter of Guðmund dýri. She had been born out of wedlock and her mother was called Valdís. Guðmund considered her a suitable match for Þorfinn but on condition that their union was permitted by ecclesiastical law. They were related to each other and Guðmund stated that he would not consent to any marriage between her and Þorfinn which was approved neither by the law of the land nor by God's law. Önund and his son interpreted this statement as a reflection on their honor and intimated that they didn't really give a damn what Guðmund thought. Guðmund had a weakness: he loved other women besides his lawful wife, who was Arndís, the daughter of the priest Pál Sölvason from Reykjaholt. Now Guðmund had numerous Þingmen and close relatives around Svarfaðardal and he frequently attended feasts there in the autumn and the spring. One spring, at one of these feasts, it chanced that Guðmund's eye was caught by a woman whom he thought beautiful and with a decidedly high opinion of herself; she was Þorgerð, the daughter of Ásbjörn valfrek, the brother of Eyjólf ofláti. Guðmund took her away with him and set her up in a place down in Myrkárdal. That summer a ship arrived with men who had been in Norway: one was Berg Þorsteinsson, another was Illugi Jósepsson, nicknamed hallfrek, and the third was Þormóð Einarsson—all men from that district. Berg and Illugi

stayed with Guðmund while Þormóð went to Kleppjárn at Hrafnagil. They had quarreled before they separated: Þormóð said some of his linen—and some other cargo—had disappeared and he put the blame on Illugi for either stealing it himself or for instigating the theft. During this autumn Guðmund made a journey into Svarfaðardal to visit Þorstein Skeggjason, a shrine-maker and an admirable craftsman capable of making a great deal of money in a short time, but such a poor manager that he never had any more food and clothes than other men. Þorstein had been friendly with Þorgerð before Guðmund had taken her as his mistress. Guðmund invited Þorstein to be his guest as well as another Þorstein, called Skáld-Stein. They were Guðmund's guests at the same time as the returned travelers. Þorfinn Önundarson also came there regularly and he talked a great deal with Ingibjörg that winter.

In the spring Illugi rode over to meet Þormóð at Hrafnagil and asked him if he still held to what he had said the previous autumn, or did he wish to withdraw the charge. Þormóð replied that if he had known and understood a thing in the autumn, he couldn't really see how he could alter his opinion in the spring. At this Illugi aimed a blow at him from the saddle and it landed across his shoulders, a severe wound. Illugi then rode off and was pursued as far as the farm at Kropp, where their way was blocked by Urða-Stein and Þorstein Arnþrúðarson, so that they were unable to capture Illugi.

Þormóð's wound healed but he was never completely fit again. Later, this dispute was brought to judgment: Illugi had to undergo the ordeal of holding a heated iron in order to clear himself of the libel, and Bishop Brand had to adjudicate on the success of the ordeal and then pass judgment.[13] When this was done, Illugi carried off the ordeal and was pronounced not guilty. Þormóð thus gained precious little for his wound because it was balanced against his imputation of theft, which had never been proved either then or later. Illugi sailed to Norway that summer and, returning to Iceland in the autumn, he settled down at Möðruvellir in Hörgárdal with Þorgrím Vigfússon alikarl, who had married Guðrún, Önund's daughter. Illugi spent the winter

there and, in the spring, he married a woman called Finna who lived at Hlaðir.

Ships had spent the winter in the harbor at Gásar and during the summer a huge market was held there. The family of Forna Söxólfsson (the Forungs) were there and the brothers Höskuld and Söxólf shared one tent with their relations: Söxólf's wife was there—she was the daughter of Daði Illugason from Skagafjörð—and her brother Brand who had married Signý, the daughter of Guðmund dýri. Ingibjörg, Signý's sister, also shared the tent, as did Guðmund, whenever his boat called in. On one such occasion, Guðmund sailed off up the fjord and, as soon as he had left, Þorfinn came to spend the day in their tent, chatting with Ingibjörg, and he did not leave until they were ready for supper. When the beds were being prepared, Þorfinn returned with two others and sat talking with Ingibjörg, fully intending to spend the night there.

At this Söxólf intervened: "It is my wish, Þorfinn, that you do not visit us or spend the night in our tent when Guðmund is away. When he is here, it is not our responsibility."

Þorfinn retorted: "My visits can't possibly harm you, unless you really try to stop them."

After this he got up, caught hold of Ingibjörg's hand and began to take her outside. Söxólf made a grab at her and tried to tug her back into the tent. Þorfinn drew his sword and aimed a blow at Söxólf, but it landed on the tent-frame between them, cutting through the straps of a shield that was hanging there. The shield fell to the ground and Söxólf used it to defend himself. Þorfinn and his companions turned to get out of the tent but they were delayed by the tent-frame and a few blows were exchanged, so that both Söxólf and Þorfinn were cut—though neither received anything that could be reckoned a wound—and then the three escaped, leaving their shields behind. Þórodd the priest claimed these so eloquently that he was allowed to keep them. The following day Guðmund came to the ship and took Ingibjörg back with him. Neither said a word to the other, as though nothing had taken place.

That same week Önund and Þorfinn set off from their home

with thirteen others and rode up to Bakki. Guðmund was home with very few men because his workmen were at a job some distance from the farm. I know nothing of the conversation between them, except that it had the following result: Ingibjörg was betrothed to Þorfinn before they parted and they decided the date of the wedding and the exact amount of her dowry. After the wedding feast was held at Guðmund's home, she went to live with Þorfinn and they were very happy together. The following summer the Bishop announced that their children could not be regarded as born within the legal degrees of matrimony. Önund took over the farm of Þórir Bárðarson, who lived at a place in Langahlíð, and it was generally held that Önund had no legal claim to the land, but such was the difference in power between them that Þórir was compelled to abandon his farm. After this Önund moved his own household to Langahlíð and Þorfinn lived at Laugaland.

10

About this time a man we have already mentioned returned to Iceland: he was Ögmund sneis, the son of Þorvarð Þorgeirsson and he had spent many years abroad. He sailed into the East Fjords and spent the winter with his cousin Teit. But by the end of the winter Teit thought his stay had been too long. Ögmund then set off into Fnjóksdal and was invited to the home of Brand who lived at Draflastaðir and had married Ingibjörg, Ögmund's sister. He spent that winter with Brand. Another visitor there was Þuríð, Brand's sister, an attractive woman with a domineering nature, and she and Ögmund slept together throughout the winter. Their conduct was severely frowned upon because she was married to Björn Hallsson (a grandson of Ásbjörn who had lived at Fornastaðir) and Hall and his sons had been friends and followers of Þorvarð, Ögmund's father. Þuríð and Ögmund could not hit it off because neither of them were easy-tempered. She had a child by him while her husband (Björn) was abroad and, by the spring Brand thought that he'd had enough of Ögmund's company. Then Þorð Þórarinsson from Laufás—another friend and close follower of Ögmund's father—invited him

to his house. Ögmund accepted the offer but he hadn't been there long before there was a great deal of gossip about him and Þórð's wife, Margrét, the daughter of Odd Gizurarson.

That summer Björn Hallsson returned to Iceland and Ögmund returned his wife, Þuríð, to Björn and offered him the right of making his own award for their misconduct. Björn accepted the offer and they were reconciled on these terms.

Ögmund spent the whole year with Þórð, but when he left in the spring, Brand took him in once more on condition that Ögmund shared half the household expenses. He still paid frequent visits to Laufás and these caused a separation between Þórð and Margrét. She journeyed east up the fjord and stayed with her brother Teit. After this Þórð invited Hákon Þórðarson to stay with him at Laufás. One day Ögmund decided to travel east towards Höfðahverfi and his route took him past the garth at Laufás; he had only one man with him, Þorstein Ketilsson. When they had passed the farm, the sons of Þórð gathered a few servants because, they said, they wanted to fetch timber from the wood. One servant was the tall and powerful Gizur Halldórsson, another was Berg, and the third was Sölvi Þóroddsson. After they had ridden up the valley on to the slope that is still called Ögmundarbrekka, they hadn't even begun to collect the timber. Instead, Hákon told the servants what he had in mind—he intended to lay an ambush and kill Ögmund, and he asked what kind of help they would give him.

Gizur said: "I certainly will not attack Ögmund but I am quite ready to hamper his companion."

Berg said nothing, but Sölvi made it clear that he would not lift a sword against Ögmund, neither would he take his side, and added that he owed Ögmund as much ill-will as they did.

They now saw Ögmund returning their way. As they came out of their ambush, the others dismounted. Gizur seized Ögmund's companion and held him fast from behind while Berg seized him around the shoulders, and in this way they turned him over on to his back. The three sons of Þórð attacked Ögmund, while Sölvi stayed out of the flight. Ögmund put up an excellent defense because he was a practised swordsman and very well

equipped. Dagstyr lunged under his guard and they thought that that thrust was a fatal wound; in fact it was only a slight wound because he was wearing a protective jerkin.[14] Ögmund was also wounded in the face and the blood ran down into his eyes so that he couldn't see where to strike his blows. At this he sat down and requested that, if they intended to kill him, he should have the services of a priest. Hildibrand and Dagstyr wished to slay Ögmund, while Hákon was against it. Sölvi then made it clear that he would assist Ögmund if they did not leave off the attack. Hákon then offered to bind Ögmund's wound—because they believed him to be fatally injured—but he refused the offer and they rode away to their farm. Þórð was outside the farm and asked what had happened. They told him about the attack on Ögmund, of his death, and that he had wished to meet a priest. Þórð said that was nothing but a trick and, if he had been there, he would have severed his head from his body. Then a priest namcd Erp rode away from the farm with another man but, when he reached the place of the encounter, Ögmund was not there: the wound was not a dangerous one and he had been assisted by his unharmed companion, so that he was carried back home to Draflastaðir where he was healed by Álfheið, the wife of Hall Ásbjarnarson from Fornastaðir.

Þorvarð Þorgeirsson was then staying at Viðimýr with Kolbein Tumason. As soon as he heard the news about his son, he ordered his horse to be saddled and he rode by night, if he failed to make it by day, until he arrived at Draflastaðir in as fast a time as was possible. Once Ögmund's wounds were healed, they arranged a peace-meeting between both sides and, though a settlement was arrived at, neither side kept to the agreed terms. Some verses were then in circulation. Ögmund composed a stanza about Dagstygg:

1. Battle-mad, in the dark, Hildibrand's brother
Attacked me from behind— the true test of courage!
That slick scythe-wielder stuck a spear in me
Until, courageous but knee-weary, I fell to the ground,
But that winter–killer of snakes— was soon over.

Dagstygg replied with this stanza:

2. Yes, it grieves me to think that this brave veteran
Was not finished off before our fight ended:
But one thing pleases me: I was lucky to see
A real fighting man— made famous by his wounds—
Slinking from the south like a snake in the bushes.

That winter Dagstygg was taken ill and died. Because they had not complied with the terms of the settlement, Ögmund prepared a new charge against those who were still alive and his lawsuit came before the Alþing. Jón Loftsson and his son Sæmund gave their backing to Ögmund's case so that a judgment was given in his favor. Ögmund was to be paid twelve hundred while Þorstein was to receive three hundred because he had been held. After this the men from Laufás used to say whenever anyone was seized:

"Be quiet, lad, and you'll get your three hundred!"

Guðmund dýri was responsible for the payment; a third was to be paid when they returned home from the Þing and a second payment was due when the Þverá-Leet-Court was held in Eyjafjörð. When they had arrived home, Ögmund called on Guðmund. but no money was paid. Ögmund did not attend the Þverá-Leet-Court[15] and no payment was made there either. Ögmund then named witnesses and declared that the truce and the entire settlement were null and void. They had now reached a position of deadlock.

11

Þorstein Halldórsson lived in Óláfsfjörð at one farm called Brekka, and at another farm of the same name lived Eyvind Bjarnarson with his mother, Sigríð. It was common gossip that Þorstein was rather partial towards Sigríð. And then Eyvind's brother Sighvat mikli returned to Iceland; he had been abroad some years, engaged on viking operations,[16] and he now settled down at Brekka. These two brothers finished their haymaking quite early, while Þorstein still had some hay to dry and had

brought it down to his home-meadow. A dairy-maid was looking after the brothers' cattle and one day she drove the herd into this home-meadow; Þorstein came up to her, told her to keep her cattle away from his hay and then drove the herd away. She said that she would go back to the farm and swear that he had driven her and the herd away from his meadow. And that is what she did.

The two brothers set off for Brekka to find Þorstein; they met him as he was leading his horse from the farm and accused him of driving their servant away by force. Þorstein denied this and pointed out that there were plenty of places to graze cattle other than on his meadow when the hay was spread out. They retorted that the summer was now so far advanced that cattle had a perfect right to graze wherever they pleased. Sighvat was carrying an axe and he struck at Þorstein; but the horse he was leading came between them; Þorstein ducked down on the farther flank of the horse, the axe-shaft landed on the horse's mane and splintered, while the edge of the axe[17] fell onto Þorstein's shoulder blade without causing any damage. Immediately he rushed around the horse towards Sighvat, struck him with a wood-axe, inflicting such a severe wound on his arm that he was never able to use it after this. So the fight ended.

Þorstein could not remain on his farm afterwards and decided to abandon it, because Sighvat and Eyvind were brothers to Arnold mikli who lived in Kviabekk. Þorstein now visited Guðmund dýri, whose Þingman he was, and spent the winter with him, leaving a servant, called Þórð, in charge of his farm. The sons of Björn made it known that they didn't expect to be repaid for their injuries out of the resources left at Brekka. During the spring, Söxólf Fornarson who lived in Myrkárdal, Urða-Stein, and the sons of Arnþrúð descended on Brekka, collected all Þorstein's possessions and removed them to Guðmund's place without any opposition.

Later still, Guðmund preferred a charge against Sighvat for personal assault on Þorstein, and Önund Þorkelsson brought a counter-charge against Þorstein for the wounding of Sighvat—because the two brothers were his Þingmen. In the summer both

cases were laid before the Alþing and ways were sought to arrive at a legal settlement. Guðmund's son-in-law, Þorfinn Önundarson, intervened to ask Guðmund to agree to a legal settlement; Þorfinn offered to undertake the award and promised Guðmund that he would gain from this. Ultimately, but reluctantly, Guðmund agreed and the two sides were reconciled. At the same Alþing, too, the lawsuit of Ögmund was also brought forward. After this the Þing ended and men returned home. Later in the summer, at a gathering in Skeiðshólmar in Hörgárdal, Þorfinn announced his award: twelve hundred for Sighvat because of his injured arm, but nothing for Þorstein. This judgment was not very popular, nevertheless the major portion of the money was paid.

12

One summer there was a horse-fighting match at Hamar in Fljót and both the owners of the fighting stallions were called Nikulás. One was the son of Runólf, a poor man of a mean family, who had three sons: the oldest was Runólf and the other two, Leif and Halli; all three were fully grown men. The other Nikulás was the son of Skratta-Björn Þorvaldsson from Grindil and he was well off and held in high regard by the local farmers. Both the stallions were grays. The horses were brought together and they bit each other without much advantage to either side as long as they were left to themselves. Then Nikulás from Mjóvafel fancied that one horse was being pricked forward excessively in order to gain the advantage. He carried a large staff and he tried to strike his opponent's horse. Nikulás Bjarnarson ducked under the blow and received it on himself; after this he aimed a blow with a hand-axe at the head of his namesake, but it was only a slight wound. At this, a considerable disturbance broke out. Runólf, the son of Nikulás from Mjóvafel, was being held back rather carelessly, so that he snatched an axe from someone and gave Nikulás Bjarnarson a severe wound between the shoulders. After this the horse-match was abandoned.

As Nikulás from Mjóvafel rode away, only slightly wounded, he said: "I don't know how I would have reacted in my prime—

but to strike a blow at the head of a sixty-year-old—and to ride home after without a bandage on the other fellow's head . . . Well!"

Afterwards Runólf rode away from that district.

Nikulás Bjarnarson's wound was healed. He was a close relation of Kolbein Tumason but a Þingman of Guðmund dýri and this dispute was settled by law. It was decided that the injuries sustained by the two namesakes should cancel each other out, but that Runólf should be banished from that district, nor should he ever enter a locality in which either Guðmund or Kolbein held legal authority over men.

Towards the end of the summer Runólf came south across the heath.[18] He was taken in by Böðvar Bjarnarson who lived at Fel in Skagafjörð, a short man of courteous nature who was nicknamed lítilskeita. Runólf stayed there right up to the time when Kolbein Tumason made a journey to Hof to attend a feast given by Grím Snorrason. Kolbein sent a message to Böðvar to say that he intended visiting him; as a result Böðvar had to send Runólf away, and he went up-country in the same district to a farm called Þverá, owned by Dálk Þorgeirsson. He was glad to take in Runólf, who stayed there throughout the winter.

The following spring Runólf asked Dálk's advice for his own future, and he said: "Go at once to Kolbein and offer him compensation for your sojourn in this area."

Dálk accompanied him, but Kolbein would not come out of doors to meet him. Dálk then went inside and asked Kolbein to come out; but he repeated that he had no wish to speak with Runólf.

Dálk then said: "You must have a higher opinion of yourself than ever your father did. One time an outlaw of his spent the winter with me and when I rode towards his home-meadow in the spring with this outlaw, your father came outside to us, and I rode away with this outlaw as free from penalty as one could expect."

Kolbein answered: "Do you think it wise that I should meet Runólf?"

"Yes," said Dálk, "I think it sensible to take something from Runólf with a good grace, rather than to have nothing at all."

After this Kolbein came out of doors and Runólf offered him a stud horse.

Kolbein said: "Go at once to Guðmund dýri and offer him another horse as well."

Kolbein and Dálk sent a servant to Guðmund along with Runólf, asking him to accept this gift of atonement. Eventually, Runólf came to Guðmund, made him the offer of the horse, and had it accepted. Runólf stayed there some nights before he set off down to Langahlíð where his brothers, Leif and Halli, were visiting Önund.

Halli announced that Runólf had given away horses, but Önund made fun of this gift, chiefly because the truce had not been made promptly as soon as it was offered. As a result, Runólf went in search of the horses and stole them away, because he knew where they were, and he brought them back to Langahlíð and offered them to Önund. He accepted Runólf and the horses and Runólf was now nicknamed "Turncoat." Guðmund behaved as though nothing had happened, and in consequence his reputation began to suffer because people thought he would always act this way in the future.

Önund's followers kept saying that Guðmund sat on his peace-chair up in Öxnadal and they would build a wall from there down into the valley and beyond, and put turf on top of it, and then bury Guðmund's reputation there. Neither Guðmund nor any of his men attended any races during the summer, nor did they attend any sports meetings that winter. But on the first Sunday after Yule there was a play at Bægisá, where lived Þorvald, a close relation of Guðmund. The people from Langahlíð came over to the play but no one came down from Öxnadal. One of the spectators was Óláf tjörskin, a guest of Kolbein Tumason, and during the play he sat on the cross-bench. As soon as it was over, he moved forward and attacked Runólf as he was walking across the floor to the exit; the blow landed on his arm so that he had only one hand after this. Óláf escaped from the hall but not from the house, for the men of Langahlíð took up positions

in front of the porch and there was a general melee. Some women got mixed in with the confusion and were able to steal Óláf away into the larder and then outside through a window slot. Out in the open, snow was driving down along the valley.

Then Þorvald asked them to stop this stamping about and they replied that they would stop immediately, if Óláf was handed over to them; they added that they wished to take him that night before Önund and find out what punishment he would devise for him. Þorvald replied that he was unable to produce Óláf; he felt certain that if they turned around quickly they might see him. At this they retorted that they wouldn't need to hunt very far. Þorvald then told them that they would only have themselves to blame if Óláf were to get a good way ahead of them. Then they all rushed outside and could see that a man was running powerfully and had already reached Lower Bægisá. The men from Langahlíð set off in pursuit as the showers grew heavier and the weather turned foul and murky. Óláf found no shelter in the dale until he reached a shieling belonging to Guðmund at a place called Varmavatn; he settled into the hut, slept for a time, and then set off once more before Önund's men had arrived there. Three times in the course of the night he managed to escape from a shieling before they got there. After the third time, they made their way down along the valley, believing that he must have taken the southern route across the heath. When daylight came, Óláf continued on his way and arrived safely back at Viðimýr. The Langahlíð-men then moved Runólf inland to Lower Bægisá, the house of Þorstein the Goldsmith, who had married Sigríð the daughter of Þjóðólf who had lived there for a long time. (It was Guðmund who had given him this establishment and the land that went with it.) Þorstein looked after Runólf and healed his wound.

At Öxnahól lived a priest, Björn Steinmóðarson, who had married Guðmund's daughter, Birna. When they separated he had given her a farm in Lower Langahlíð.[19] Their daughter was also named Birna and both were gracious and beautiful ladies. Now Þorvald from Bægisá often paid visits to talk with the young Birna. One of his servants, Guðmund Tassason, also took great

pleasure in talking to the elder Birna, so that they paid their visits together. A fortnight after Runólf was wounded, they paid a visit to Langahlíð and sat talking to the women as they usually did. During the day Leif and Halli, the sons of Nikulás, arrived there and sat indoors. At twilight Þorfinn Önundarson also arrived with Tjörvi from Rauðalæk who had served Önund for a long time. As they entered the living room, Halli sprang up, aimed at Þorvald, and dealt him a glancing blow on the chest, while Leif and Tjörvi held back Guðmund. After this, Þorfinn and his men rode away and the elder Birna attended to Þorvald's wound while Guðmund rode home.

As soon as Guðmund dýri heard the news he set off from Bakki with thirteen followers and came to Lower Langahlíð to find out if Þorvald was fit to be moved up to his house. On the same day Önund set off from home for Bægisá to find out how Runólf's hand was responding to treatment; but neither side knew of the other's arrangements. Önund's party was fifteen strong. And as both sides approached, they recognized each other.

Hákon Þórðarson, in Guðmund's party, said: "What a good thing that we meet here! We can now fight things out to the end. I don't think we can ever lose fewer men than now, because we will surely have to fight them soon."

Guðmund answered: "This isn't the difference in our forces that I should choose for a fight."

Hákon said: "To hell with the difference in numbers! Our quarrel with them must be decided as Fate would have it."

Guðmund then commanded: "No one in my troop must incite them with insults or with any show of force; but if they begin it, let us give of our best."

It was obvious that Hákon was not slow with his insults. Önund's party halted on a little hill and Guðmund's men rode by, so that neither side attacked the other. Afterwards Guðmund rode on to Lower Langahlíð and took Þorvald home with him that night, without meeting Önund's party. Þorvald was then completely healed.

13

Erlend was the son of Þorgeir who had been nicknamed Óhæfu-Geirr. Erlend had been abroad with Þorvarð Ásgrímsson auðgi and now lived at Myrká; he was very popular, a huge and powerful man, who supported Önund although he owned his own farm. Early in the spring Erlend rode across to Langahlíð to see Önund and informed him that he had observed that Guðmund was accompanied by a troop of men wherever he went. Erlend added that he knew that Söxólf Fornason in Myrkárdal had assembled a crowd of supporters. He advised Önund to be more careful from now on. Leif and Halli were standing by and they answered:

"Recently we two made a tour of all Öxnadal, inspecting all the upper pastures, and we found nothing except one old hornless ewe that had lost its wool and will be scarcely able to walk this spring. So we believe that Guðmund will continue to sit firmly on his peace-stool."

Önund said: "It's quite likely that he is sitting quietly for a time, but were he to get up, it would be difficult to predict with certainty how far he would step out."

Then Erlend returned home.

During this same spring two servants went indoors at Langahlíð in daylight in order to discuss certain necessary things with Önund, but they failed to find him. This happened three times, although he was sitting in his usual place. Arnþrúð, the daughter of Forna, lived at Sakka in Svarfaðardal with her sons. A strange thing happened one morning while the men were resting in the hall: two axes sang out loudly on the axe-rest. They were taken down and given to the sons of Arnþrúð, Þorstein and Snorri, but the noise did not abate although they gripped the axes tightly. They sent for the priest Guðmund Arason, and the noise ceased after he had sprinkled the axes with holy water.

A week after his visit to Langahlíð, Erlend detected signs of men being called up and he set off from his home. (This was the third evening before Ascension Day.[20]) He was accompanied by his stepson Hauk, and they rode as far as the river Barká where they were stopped by Söxólf Fornason with eight men, who asked Erlend's destination.

He said: "Langahlíð."

Söxólf replied: "Let me advise you to proceed no further than this—this is for your own good."

Erlend said: "I can't think of any obstacles on this road that will stop my journey." But Söxólf suggested that this was something he would find out for himself.

Erlend continued his ride as far as Öxnahól, where he stayed for a time before setting off again with six extra supporters. When this party of eight made their way above Hallfríðarstaðir, they found their way blocked for the second time by Söxólf, with fourteen men.

Söxólf said: "Turn back, Erlend, and go no further. I know that you have deduced that troops are being assembled that threaten Önund somewhat, and it is a mark of your courage that you wish to warn him. Nothing can prevent things now from taking their course and it could prove dangerous for you. No action can now hinder or delay the clash between Önund and our side. If you look towards Öxnadalsmynni, by the side of Grænabrú there, you can see a troop of men advancing. And over there, where the sun gleams down from the rocks, you can make out the reflection of shields—those are the men from Svarfaðardal. These two forces will join and attack Önund tonight."

Erlend realized the desperate need to continue his errand and spurred his horse. Söxólf caught the reins and Erlend dismounted and tried to run for it. Snorri Arnþrúðarson aimed a blow at him, but Hauk interposed his shield and Erlend was unhurt. Erlend then attacked Snorri, but Brand[21] defended him with his shield so that there was no wound. Then Sighvat Söxólfsson rushed forward, lunged at Erlend with his spear, caught him low down on the thigh, and cut it with a glancing blow. After this Erlend's party was forced to turn round and return to Öxnahól.

Afterwards Guðmund's troops came together on a sand bank on the lower side of Langahlíð. Kolbein Tumason had also arrived from the west with his force and, in all, Guðmund's force was almost ninety strong. The people at Langahlíð could now see this force and realized that they meant to fight; their own

muster was about fifty men. The general opinion was that it would be the best tactics to dispose their forces around the outside of the buildings. There were various defensive earthworks around the buildings and it was argued that, with their assistance, they could hold off any attack for a long time out of doors. Önund, however, brought forward numerous examples to support his view that the attackers suffered most when they had to attack a farm defended from indoors. The others countered his argument with their belief that the buildings would be set alight over their heads. Önund, refusing to accept this possibility. insisted on his plan and all the defenders went indoors.

14

The attacking force dismounted outside the home-meadow, moved around all the buildings, and divided their troops: some were behind the house and the remainder were disposed to attack from two sides, if the defenders decided to come outside. But when they closed in on all the exits, they found that all the defenders were inside, with but one door left open. From there Önund asked who was in charge of this army.

Guðmund replied: "Not much of a leader. That hornless ewe is now here, having walked down from the valley, and though she has practically no wool left I don't think you'd find a more suitable bell-wether than that. I think she has two things in mind, either to lose that little bit of fleece that's left on her or to return home with a brand-new fleece."

Önund then asked if a truce could be arranged for his followers. Guðmund answered, "Things have gone too far to talk of peace offers, even if they were to be offered. Nothing can come of that now."

"In that case," said Önund, "we will not suggest it."

Guðmund's men then made a rush to enter the porch and the inside doors were secured against them.

Guðmund and his men could see that it would be a long job to capture the house and its out-buildings, unless they set fire to it, because it was defended by so many well-armed men. But

they couldn't find any fire to start things off. Men were sent to a group of houses called Grund and fire was found in one farm but not in another. Others broke into a byre and dragged and carried hay to the buildings, but, when the fire arrived, they were unable to set light to the bundles in front of the doors. Þórð Laufæsing and his men climbed on top of the house, tore open the thatch, and set fire to the roof. Hay was stuffed into all the window vents. The roof-timbers under the thatch were so dry that it was not easy for those inside the buildings to protect themselves against the spreading fire. The defenders asked that the women, and those men who were not involved in their dispute, should be allowed to leave the house. Guðmund ordered his men to break open a wall close to the door near to a main beam,[22] and those with permits came out that way—because there were many men inside to whom Guðmund wished no harm. After this the smoke grew so thick that it was difficult to see clearly.

One of the defenders—Þórodd, nicknamed laugarnef—carried in his arms a mixed collection of weapons, which he attempted to take out of the house. Hákon Þórðarson was outside and immediately dealt him his death blow: this was not a case of mistaken identity, because Þórodd was one of the proscribed men. He was the first man to die. Also inside was Gálm Grímsson, a good farmer living at Dynhagi who was friendly with all the attackers, especially with Kolbein Tumason. He came to the door in order to treat with them, because at that time the fire had not taken such a hold that a great deal could not have been saved. He begged Guðmund and Kolbein to go away and leave things as they were, and offered them all his possessions in exchange. He was extremely rich and owned an excellent house. Kolbein replied that he was prepared to give Gálm any sum he would name on condition that he left the house.

Gálm said: "You have often laughed at me because I liked to take a steam bath and to follow it with a long drink. Now I can see that the bath is ready, but I'm not so certain about the drink of mead afterwards."

He did not leave the house.

Then Þorfinn shouted to his brother-in-law, Guðmund: "It's a shame that your own daughter, Ingibjörg, isn't inside here!"

Guðmund replied: "I am very glad that she isn't, but it wouldn't have made any difference."

After this Halli Nikulásson rushed outside; he was severely affected by the heat and fell down into a stream that flowed past the door. Snorri Arnþrúðarson had been told off to execute him, and he rushed up and killed him in the brook. Later, Tjörvi came outside and his executioner was Þorvald from Bægisá, who ran him through with his sword. After this Tjörvi continued walking down the field to where Guðmund was standing.

Guðmund had not seen the wound and said: "Let Tjörvi be spared—you do not deserve punishment."

Tjörvi answered, "I have no need of a truce," and fell down dead.

Then Leif Nikulásson rushed out and his executioner was to be Guðmund Tassason. Leif had no weapon and he clutched at Svein Jónsson and used him as a protecting shield. Hákon Þórðarson saw this and aimed at Leif's shoulder, cutting him right down from the shoulder; but Leif managed to make his way into the church despite this wound.

A wind blew up during the night and they were afraid that the church would catch fire. Guðmund then promised to give a cow to the church if it was preserved and the wind subsided. Immediately a powerful blast of wind proceeded from the church and drove back the flames completely. They were still unable to approach the fire, because the brands roared upwards and were scattered far and wide as all the buildings burned fiercely. They then saw something being thrown through the breach that had earlier been made in the wall and did not recognize it until it continued to move; they shouted and asked what was that. A man answered and said it was Þorfinn. His executioner was to be Urða-Stein, but he wasn't ready because his hair and his clothes were on fire. So Þorstein and Snorri, the sons of Arnþrúð, rushed up and attacked Þorfinn. He taunted them to lay it on thick and fast because, if he lived, they would find no worse enemy than he. He succeeded in making the church, covered with wounds,

and lived for three nights afterwards. It was the general opinion that Þorfinn had been so severely burned that he could not have survived in any case. Önund and Gálm were burned to death inside.

The burning came to an end before the morning meal. The sons of Þórð went around the ruins and stuck their spears into all the places that might conceivably have been used as hiding places. Afterwards they rode away and had their breakfast at Bakki. As they rode away from the fire, Kolbein said this stanza:

3. Over-cunning fellows full of their own fury
Tagged a label on Guðmund taunted his gentle nature:
Now they must re-read it: the hot storm makes clear
This man's core is fierce not gutless—
Our dauntless leader controls the flame.

Kolbein returned west to his estate the same day, but before they separated each of them swore an oath to avenge any one of the others if they were attacked because of this deed. One man only refused to swear the oath—Bersi Vermundarson from Móberg. He said that he would not undertake to avenge indiscriminately every wrong-doer, even though he happened to be a member of their company.

15

Guðmund now realized that he had plenty of antagonists and he sent a message to Ögmund sneis saying that he wished to pay the fines that had been previously withheld from Ögmund, and stated that payment would be made if they were to meet. In this way it was made clear, although unexpectedly, that Guðmund could act with generosity to men who were in severe straits. Ögmund had established himself at Háls with meager resources. Because Ögmund could see no possible way of providing so many men for himself that he should not have less than Guðmund, he did not go to meet Guðmund. Afterwards Guðmund himself provided cattle to the full value of the fine that had been previously levied (twelve hundred), added another three hundred to

it, and had it all sent to Ögmund with this message, that Ögmund should not join forces against him in the case that was then pending. When Ögmund received the payment, he was very glad to have it.

The men of Hörgárdal were so kept under by Guðmund that they sent a message to Bishop Brand asking him to come east and settle things between them. The Bishop set off at once up across the heaths, and they had a leather hammock and a rope sling so that the Bishop could be carried if he grew weary of the journey. When they arrived there in the north, they held a peace-meeting and agreed that Jón Loftsson should make the award. Then Þorgrím alikarl sent a messenger to Sæmund Jónsson because two of Sæmund's children (Pál and Margrét) were by Þorgrím's sister. Because of this message, Sæmund gathered a large following for his ride to the Alþing. For that summer, it was a very crowded assembly, extremely well attended, and split into two camps. Supporting Guðmund and Kolbein was Þorvald Gizurarson and all his brothers, as well as Sigurð Ormsson, while Sæmund was backed by all the sons of Sturla.

Now Eyjólf Hallsson from Grenjaðarstaðir rode south to Keldur to visit Jón Loftsson, who had decided not to attend the Þing until Eyjólf said that there was some possibility of a reconciliation being reached, if only Jón would make the final awards in the case.

Jón answered: "I am in no way suitable to act, because I have never had to decide such a case before."

Eyjólf urged, "Even so, it is worth making an attempt to see that men are reconciled; and who can possibly do this if you believe that you are ill-qualified to do it!"

Eventually, Jón agreed to attend the Þing, which was held in bad weather with heavy downpours of rain.

Jón and both bishops, Pál and Brand, opened the negotiations for a peace-settlement and it was agreed that Jón alone should make all the decisions unchallenged. Both sides swore oaths to abide by this, and Jón then announced his verdicts there and then at the Þing. For the burning of Önund and all the incidents connected with it, he awarded sixty "hundreds" (of the standard

measure of three ells of wadmal to one ounce of silver); for the killing of Þórodd fifteen hundreds and, likewise for another man, he awarded fifteen hundreds, bringing the total to one hundred and twenty hundreds, along with what was paid for the death of Þorfinn (that is, thirty hundreds). He then considered the counter charges brought forward by the defendants and it was maintained that some of these men had been outside the law, and therefore not entitled to legal retribution when they were slain. Guðmund and Kolbein said that they would not pay a fine for Gálm because they had offered him money to leave the house. Guðmund had to pay for the land at Langahlíð at its evaluation before it was destroyed and had to compensate for all the possessions of Önund that were burned: he had to find forty hundreds. As to the goods in the house belonging to other men, it was decided that each man who had received five hundreds or less should have his award increased by a further half. But those who received ten hundreds or more should get the full value of their goods.

The sentences of outlawry were also promulgated at the Þing. The sons of Arnþrúð, Þorstein and Snorri, had to leave Iceland, one of them to stay abroad for three years and the other never to return, but the final decision on that was left to them. Þórð's sons had to leave Iceland, one for three years and the other for life, and once more the choice was left to them. It was also decided that Þórð laufæsing should either leave Iceland for three years or pay a fine of fifteen hundreds; but he swore that he would do neither. Also a hundred should be paid for every man who had helped with the burning and this came to a hundred hundreds; Kolbein had to pay half of this and a half of the wergild for Önund. Both Kolbein and Guðmund were to stay away from their estates for three winters, if they wished, and then the fines would be decreased by five hundreds for each winter of absence from home.[23]

After the verdict men returned home from the Þing and Guðmund began immediately to pay the entire fine with everything that he had from his own estate. He paid off with horses and other possessions right through the summer, as far as he could

find people to exchange with him. At the beginning of the next winter Jón Loftsson died and there was peace in the district for some time after.

16

A man called Erlend rauði was lodging in Skjaldarvík and one day, by accident, he met Illugi from Hlaðir. As they talked, they began to argue about the merits of different men. Erlend maintained that Kálf Guttormsson, who had newly arrived in Iceland, was more courteous and valiant in every way than other men. Illugi argued that Þorgrím alikarl was the bravest man. In the end, Erlend slew Illugi and this was apparently the only reason for it. Erlend fled and joined Kálf and Guðmund but, the following spring, they sent him south to Þorvald of Hruni with instructions to ship Erlend to Norway. Þorvald booked his passage from Eyr but he missed his ship. Sigurð Oddson, nicknamed grikk, took up the law suit for the killing, but the case fell through and no compensation was paid for Illugi. Þorvald then booked a second passage for Erlend, sailing from Eyr at Hjalta, and this ship did not get away from the harbor that autumn. Þorvald could not put up with Erlend's temper and sent him back up north to Guðmund.

Erlend began to ferry cargoes between the coast and Grímsey until he met a man called Brand on Grímsey. He was Illugi's brother and not quite twenty years old. Brand inflicted a severe wound on Erlend and was highly praised by everyone. Erlend never recovered completely from this wound. He sought a meeting with Bishop Brand and asked his advice as to what he should do. The Bishop advised him to set off on a begging expedition and prepare himself for the life of a monk. This is what Erlend did throughout the summer and his wounds were ripped open and healed slowly. Thereafter he was consecrated as a monk at Þingeyrar, but it seems that they could not tolerate him for long because of his temper and he wandered about throughout the locality.

17

During the summer of the burning and the following summer, not a single ship put in at harbors in the north of Iceland and this delayed the voyage overseas of those who had been banished. Þorgrím alikarl, who had married Önund's daughter Guðrún, lived at Möðruvellir in Hörgárdal. Guðmund dýri continued his efforts in all directions to pay the fines imposed on him. He owned a ferry-boat and in it he made trips north to Slétta and Grímsey to collect his produce and any money due to him; he borrowed money wherever he could and encouraged others to do the same on his behalf. Kolbein Tumason spent the first winter away from home at Þingeyrar. Then Þorgrím hired an assassin to kill Kolbein but nothing came of it and, after this, Kolbein refused to pay any of the fines.

During the autumn, two summers after the burning, all the sons of Önund (Vigfús, Hámund, and Þórð) were together at Möðruvellir. Þórð, who was under age and newly ordained to the priesthood, had been given a safe-conduct at the burning; Vigfús, also a priest, had not been implicated in the final peace-settlement and had behaved as though it had nothing to do with him. Also present at this gathering were Fálki Dálksson and an outlaw called Starkað. One morning at breakfast, the plates were served with nothing on them but the singed heads and feet of sheep that had been killed that autumn.

Þorgrím said: "What kind of food is this? A man deserves something more substantial than this."

Guðrun replied: "My larder can only stretch as far as singed sheep."

Her brother, Vigfús, then said: "No one can deny that you have reminded us what we have suffered through singed flesh."

That same day Þorgrím rode across to Arnarnes with fourteen men, to the farm of Hákon Þórðarson: they were after two things, money and physical revenge. When they arrived, Hákon was away from home, so they ransacked the place and stole ten hundreds of russet wadmal[24] which Hákon had got together for his voyage overseas. There was no opposition except that Hákon's wife, Guðrún, hurled a torrent of abuse at them. When

they returned to Möðruvellir, Guðrún, the daughter of Önund, was standing at the entrance and refused to give house-room to stolen goods. They took the stuff to Laugaland, the home of Sighvat and Eyvind, the sons of Björn.

As soon as Þorgrím's party had left Möðruvellir, a messenger was sent to Hákon who was on board a ship beyond Hjaltaeyr with his brother Hildibrand, Þorstein Urða-Stein, and the two sons of Arnþrúð, Snorri and Þorstein. As soon as they heard the news, they sailed along the coast to Svarfaðardal, landed at the river mouth, beached their boat, and rode from there to Sakka, where they were joined by Klæng and Brand, the sons of Arnþrúð. They rode up along the valley during the night in order to contact Kolbein, because they thought it more convenient to find him than Guðmund, who was away in the north at Melrakkaslétta. They rode by way of the pass called Litla-Skarð into the upper part of the valley. From there they moved down the valley, breakfasting at Urðir with the priest Orm Fornason and then arrived at Sakka, where Klæng stayed behind. The other six returned to their boat and rowed east around Hrísey until they anchored off Laugarkamb and decided to sleep on board. When Brand awoke, they were talking so loudly that, for a moment, he thought he was being haunted by his dreams. They were arguing that Þórð (Guðmund's brother) could not possibly stay in safety in Laufás and that they should go there and take him away to the north with them. They tied up their boat in a pool to the north of the home-meadow, went up to the house and ate their supper there. Afterwards they settled down to sleep in the living room and locked the door from the inside. Þórð was not at home.

18

We must now return to Þorgrím on the other side of the fjord, where he had boarded a boat with eleven others: the priest Vigfús Önundarson; Hámund, his brother; Sighvat mikli; Eyvind, his brother; Fálki Dálksson; Starkað, the outlaw; Ásmund; Eyjólf, the son of Eilíf ristarbein; Sölvi, the son of Þórodd laugarnef; Sigurð grikk; and Þorgrím, his brother. They rowed across

the fjord to Laufás and tied up their boat next to Hákon's; they recognized it and made their way to the farm and straight into the hall, but couldn't find their neighbors. They then tried the door into the living room and, finding it locked, they tore back the window frame. The noise wakened Brand, who jumped up and asked who it was. Þorgrím recognized his voice, called to his companions and said: "Come on, lads, here are those devils, the sons of Arnþrúð!"

They threw stones through the window without any damage to those inside. Hákon asked for the size of their party and Þorgrím said, "We are a hundred."

Hákon then asked for permission to come outside, but this was refused. Þorgrím's men then set fire to the living-room door and kept it going with bits of wood torn from any chests they could find. When the men inside could smell the smoke, they begged them not to set fire to the farm. Hákon asked for a truce and Þorgrím promised to grant safe-conduct to Hákon and Hildibrand. The attackers then broke into the living room through the window and dragged them all out with a rope except for Þorstein Urða-Stein. He said that he would never allow himself to be dragged outside, even if the entire farm were burned around him.

Once out-of-doors, they were all tied up except Hákon, who remained outside there, quite free to move. And when Erp the priest came out, he suggested that Hákon should make for the church and protect himself.

Hákon replied: "There is no need—they've given me safe-conduct."

The priest said:. "No one has yet tested their promises."

Hákon then said: "But I haven't been given permission to enter the church"; to which the priest answered, "I should take full responsibility, even if you were to save your life in the church."

Hákon then repeated his statement: "Whatever you say, I cannot take sanctuary because they have not given me their permission to do so.[25] If they break their word, it will be their responsibility."

At this the priest unlocked the church and left the door ajar.

The priest then attended to the spiritual needs of the three sons of Arnþrúð and, as he did so, Brand realized that his bonds were not completely tied. He made a sudden movement, got free, and managed to reach the church although he was chased right up to the door. His brothers, Þorstein and Snorri, made ready to die, washing their hands and combing their hair, as if about to visit friends. Then Snorri said: "I wish to be executed before Þorstein because I think I can trust him to forgive you even if he sees me killed."

Þorgrím's men assured him that their eyes would be covered, but the brothers beseeched them not to bandage their eyes like thieves because they had actually seen weapons used quite often. Snorri was killed first by Hámund Önundarson and then Vigfús Önundarson said that he realized it was fitting that he should execute Þorstein, but he shrunk from doing it because he was a priest. Fálki Dálksson assured him that they would easily find a man for the job, and so Starkað the outlaw executed Þorstein.

Sighvat mikli strongly urged them to kill the sons of Þórð; he said that they would prove to be Þorgrím's most determined enemies if they were to live. Þorgrím agreed and gave the order to seize the brothers. Hildibrand made his way towards the church and succeeded in gripping the post of the door pillar, but they tore him free and then Sölvi slew him. Only Hákon was left. He begged them to cut off one of his hands and feet and offered to go abroad and atone for himself and the others by making a pilgrimage to Rome. Þorgrím said that he could not agree to torture him in that way. Hákon then asked them to run him through with a spear, but not to execute him with a sword.[26] Nor would Þorgrím agree to this. No one was prepared to execute Hákon: Sölvi would not because he had plighted his truce with Hákon over the death of his own father, Þórodd.

In the end, Sigurð grikk said: "I see that I must kill Hákon and settle this problem for you."

Hákon said: "You would probably be my choice, too, because I owe you least of all those who are here. I took you in when

you arrived in Iceland without a penny and I gave you lodgings. I even stood by three times when you slept with Guðrún, my wife."

He gave up his own sword to Sölvi Þóroddson and then Sigurð executed Hákon.

After this they made their way in to the living room and, forcing their way towards Þorstein, they attacked him, but he defended himself with great dexterity. There was an entrance leading from the living room into the meat-storehouse and the door gave way as Þorstein backed against it, and he disappeared inside almost mortally wounded. A woman came outside and made her way to the church, clutching a male-child she had had by Hildibrand.

Sighvat asked if he should kill the child, but Þorgrím rushed up and said: "No one here attacks women or children, even if this lad should eventually kill us all."

Afterwards he and his men rode away.

Þórð returned to his farm after they had left and when he saw what had been done, he said: "Here's a lot of fresh-killed meat to be moved."

The bodies were then prepared for burial and the sons of Þórð were buried there at their own home, while Þorstein and Snorri were interred at Vellir in Svarfaðardal.

When Þorgrím's party had crossed the fjord, they took horse and rode to Guðmund's estate at Bakki, ransacked the place, and stole all his weapons and shields. But they could not find Guðmund's best shield. They seized one of Guðmund's followers, Valgarð Hjartarson, and tried to force him to reveal its whereabouts; Sighvat mikli struck him with his sword, landing on his arm, so that he lost a hand. But he said nothing and they made off down to Skeiðshólmar where they erected a tent, because they were expecting Guðmund to return from the north and they had decided to ambush him as he rode from his ship. But Sighvat Söxólfsson and Gizur, the son of Höskuld Fornason, rode off from Bakki by way of Skjálgsdalsheið into Eyjafjörð, and then, taking fresh horses each time their horses were exhausted, they rode continuously north to Slétta, where they found Guð-

mund and told him the news. He found men to follow with his ferry-boat while he, with three others, returned as quickly as possible by land, so that he was in his estate, with a large body of men, before Þorgrím's party were aware of his movements.

Þorgrím then returned to Laugaland and assembled a number of supporters in addition to his Þingmen,[27] so that both sides were in strong encampments although neither side made a move against the other. Bishop Brand rode over from the west and urged them to disband their camps. Following the Bishop's advice, Þorgrím moved his men inland to Eyjafjörð and then south across the heath until they arrived in Rangárvellir at the place called Klofi. This was the home of Einar Bárðarson who had married Guðrun, the daughter of Gísli and the sister of Þorgrím alikarl. They stayed there for a time; afterwards Einar accompanied them down to Oddi, where Sæmund was happy to receive them, and they spent a fortnight there. From there they rode up over the most easterly Skarð to stay with the two brothers Eyjólf oði and Hall the priest (the sons of Þorstein), because Hall and Önund Þorkelsson were cousins.

As soon as they had left Oddi, Sæmund met his brother Orm and asked for the news and Sæmund told him what he had heard.

Orm said: "Brother, have you promised Þorgrím your support in these disputes?"

Sæmund replied: "Certainly I have offered him the benefit of my general oversight of the situation—but how does the affair seem to you, and what part do you propose to play in it?"

Orm then said: "Naturally you can assume that I will never leave you in the lurch. But I must say that I have never taken sides in any disputes with less enthusiasm than these."

Sæmund asked him to explain and Orm answered: "It is my ambition to gain a reputation for myself. Our father's reputation stood so high in the land that no one involved in a legal dispute would have been dissatisfied if the final award was placed in father's hands. I cannot decide which was the more amazingly unprecedented: the particular disputes that were entrusted to his judgment, or the subsequent awards that he made in those disputes. But now the money has been paid," Orm continued,

"even those excessively severe fines which, so men believed, would never be paid in full and would therefore lead to a breakdown of the truce arrangements. Furthermore, the men who accepted the money have now violated the truce and rendered null and void everything that our father set out to achieve, so that I am not disposed to back Þorgrím and so dishonor our father's word or to bring dishonor upon both his personal reputation and the good name of all of us who are his sons."

After this conversation, so men said, Sæmund's support for Þorgrím diminished considerably.

Eyjólf from Skarð visited Sæmund and asked that he should help to support him and Þorgrím during the winter—but nothing came of it, and Eyjólf then invited all of them to spend the winter with him. Eyjólf's brother Hall had a well-stocked farm, while Eyjólf was poor and improvident; the two brothers usually pooled their resources. Hall realized that Eyjólf's farm couldn't possibly sustain Þorgrím's party for long and he made the following bargain with Þorgrím: Þorgrím's party should take over Hall's farm—which the latter had leased the previous May—on condition that Þorgrím should be responsible for any profit or loss and, in exchange, should lodge as many men as he wished there throughout the winter. After this, Hall was a lodger with Þorgrím although he had been a supporter of Vigfús Önundarson. Hámund spent the winter at Stafaholt in the west, with Eyjólf Þorgeirsson.

19

We must now return to Guðmund dýri. That winter, after the Feast of All Souls, the rumor spread from the south, and up along Eyjafjörð, that Þorgrím had set off with a hundred men to attack Guðmund and that he had reached Gnúpufellsskógar. Guðmund sent word to Kolbein Tumason, asking him to come from the west with as big a force as he could muster. Kolbein immediately raised a force of men and set off for the north. At the same time Guðmund made for Laugaland, plundered the district, and took away all the cattle he could find. He toured

the dale and extracted fines from all the farmers who had joined with Þorgrím the previous autumn. He then arrived at the home of the priest Björn in Öxnahól; he took him away with him and also his mistress, Þórun the daughter of Önund. The word was passed round that she should sleep with any waster who wanted her without bringing any more dishonor on Björn the priest, because he had supported Þorgrím in the autumn and because his son, Steinmóð, had joined Þorgrím's camp. The same evening that Guðmund returned home, Kolbein arrived from the west with fifty men; but when he learned that Þórun was there, he demanded that she should not be dishonored, out of respect for her brother Brúsi. Kolbein then composed this stanza:

4. I am not ready to restrain bold fighters
Who plunder the farmers in this valley:
They must expect their easy peace to be broken
And get no compensation for their troubles.
For, if that other army came up from south,
Those fierce soldiers gathering around Kjöl,
Then these farmers will be the first to welcome
The bold courage of my bonny fighters.

That night, when it was time to sleep, they all settled down in their various places around the hall.[28] Björn the priest left his bunk and came to Kolbein and asked that he should save him from such dishonor; he offered to pay Kolbein whatever he asked. Kolbein gave Björn his word for this, but he and Guðmund disagreed violently about it. Kolbein made it clear that because he had supported Guðmund so far, he must be allowed to have his way over Björn. Kolbein gained his point and the next day Björn returned home with Þórun and paid Kolbein two oxen for his support.

Later they learned that Þorgrím had not left the south, but Kolbein stayed on for some time. His men quarreled with Guðmund's party: they fought over games and women and stole from each other, so that, before they left, both sides were seething with enmity. Kolbein made a final tour of the dale and took from the farmers anything that he fancied, without any settle-

ment or interference from Guðmund until Kolbein had gone. He set off for his home in the west and disbanded his army at Miklabær.

20

Böðvar lítilskeyta and his brother Þorvald were riding along the coast until they came to a farm called Tjörn. On the road they met an outlaw, Þorstein Rannveigarson, who was leading his two-year-old heifers that he had bought to see him through the winter. The previous autumn Þorstein had joined Þorgrím's camp but he had not joined any of their expeditions. The brothers attacked Þorstein in order to kill him. The powerfully built Þorstein caught hold of Böðvar, who was a small man, and used him as a shield so that Þorvald was unable to attack him. Instead Böðvar was wounded by his own brother and begged that they should stop the fight. When they parted, Þorstein had their shields and they had his spear and heifers. He escaped to the water and crossed the ice which was one night old, while they drove off his heifers and slew them at home. Þorstein made his way to Bishop Brand at Hólar and complained that Böðvar had robbed him of his means of subsistence. Óláf Vífilsson lived in Laxárdal —to the west of Skagafjörð close to the entrance to the fjord; he was Þorstein's kinsman and the previous summer he had given his bond for Þorstein at the Þing, but the fine had not been paid and Þorstein had not been acquitted. Bishop Brand suggested that Þorstein should visit Óláf and discover if he would provide for his winter lodgings with the money that had not been offered for Þorstein's acquittal. He set off at once and, returning to Hólar the next evening, informed the bishop that his errand had been fruitless. The bishop said that he had no other plan for him, but Þorstein was equipped with weapons so that he could defend himself.

Hermund was a substantial bóndi who lived at Heið where Fljót joined Skagafjörð, and his daughter Gróa was known as Heiðar-Gróa. She was a beautiful, well-mannered woman. Böðvar lítilskeyta from Fell paid frequent visits to talk with Gróa but it was generally believed that she was not very impressed by

him. Beinir Sigmundarson (and grandson of Ásólf) lived at Næfrholt on Rangvellir; he was powerfully built and courteous in manner. At this time he was employed at Haganes in Fljót by Illugi, the son of Ásgrím skáld, and he often paid visits to Heið and took great delight in talking to Gróa. People said that his wooing was very much to her liking. Now Þorstein the outlaw was related to Gróa and, when he left Hólar, he called on Gróa and they had a long chat, after which he went across to Haganes to meet Beinir. From them they both rode along the route to Heið that Böðvar usually followed, and waited in ambush until he rode along with his brother Þorvald. Beinir seized Þorvald and held him back, while Þorstein slew Böðvar. Afterwards Þorstein took Böðvar's horse and rode off to meet Óláf; there he exchanged Böðvar's horse for a stallion belonging to Óláf and rode west to Svein Sturluson in Dal. Hermund and Illugi offered bail of twelve "hundred" on Beinir's behalf, and he was free to go wherever he pleased.

21

When this winter was over, Þorgrím's men rode towards Skagafjörð from their quarters around Kjöl in the south and were joined by all the tramps who were without jobs. They rode up into Goðdal, then along the upper road toward Eyjafjörð until they reached the farm called Leyning, which was owned by Bersi. They ransacked the place and stole food and linen and wadmal with which to make clothes for themselves. They then made extensive forays throughout that district and forced the farmers to join their army. When this news spread, Eyjólf's party set out from the north to meet them and, on the way, they visited Guðmund dýri and persuaded him to accompany them to a meeting of reconciliation. Kolbein, too, arrived from the west with a small contingent, and when he met Guðmund. he uttered the following stanza:

5. With a song of praise I pay another visit
To the valiant chieftain. For men in ambush
Have used various means to obtain their winter meat.

Oftentimes Guðmund's house has endured a spring-clean,
And the fighting sailor made good his escape
By walking with skill across the sea-road.

The peace meeting was held by the river Glerá, with the two parties on opposite banks. There was a bridge across the river, with a rocky ravine below. Eyjólf acted as intermediary and arranged the conditions of a peace settlement, and all the men who were present—Vigfús as well as all the others—gave their word to abide by the terms. Teit Oddsson, who lived east in the fjords, should make the award for the killing of the sons of Þórð and also for the ransacking in Arnarnes. But Þorvald Gizurarson should be the arbitrator for the death of the sons of Arnþrúð, for the ransack of Guðmund's property, and for the wounding of Guðmund's servant Valgarð. Þorstein Urða-Stein had then recovered from his injuries, and Þorvald should also decide the amount of his compensation. After the peace meeting they returned to their homes.

Þorgrím returned to Laugaland and during that summer his herd of cows never exceeded ten. That same summer, Vigfús and Sölvi sailed to Norway and were never considered of much standing after these events. In the summer during the mowing period, Hall the priest rode from the south to Laugaland and Þorgrím paid him in full for everything that he had consumed at his farm during the previous winter. After this Hall returned home and they parted on the best of terms.

22

When Hall the priest had been at home a short while he rode to Oddi but the purpose of his visit was not known. Soon afterwards Þorstein Jónsson came from the south and, so he said, intended to sail to Norway; his wife Þórdís was with him but very few men. He made his way towards Eyjafjörð and stayed for a time with Jón Örnólfsson at Miklagarð. As soon as it was known that Þorstein had arrived in the district, the inhabitants from the upper fjords joined his force in large numbers. When Þorgrím heard of his, he removed all his household inland and joined

forces with Þorstein; sometimes they rode together across to Laugaland with a large party or to visit the ships, and they always spent the nights together.

Kálf Guttormsson lived at Auðbrekka with his wife Ósk, the daughter of Þorvarð auðgi; Guðmund had arranged the marriage because Þorvarð was his nephew. Guðmund spent part of his time at home in Bakki and the rest of it at Auðbrekka, because he thought it safer to create some uncertainty about his precise whereabouts. One saint's day, Þorstein's men were at Laugaland and had ridden from there to the ship. Guðmund was in Auðbrekka and Kálf was preparing to visit the ship with his men. Þorstein's party had reached the ship first, had dismounted and were standing on the other side of the trading-booths. Then Guðmund rode up with Kálf's men, dismounted, and took up positions opposite Þorstein's party—and there they stood facing each other. The Norwegian sailors were greatly amused and laughed at the rather boastful behavior of the Icelanders. Eventually some men from both parties went up to the merchants and arranged to take them in for the winter as paying guests. Guðmund agreed to take a man called Ásbjörn lýri, while Þorstein's men offered to take a man called Þorbjörn, nicknamed Grænlending.

Kálf then said to Guðmund: "Why shouldn't we have a go at them now? The odds are nicely in our favor and it's my guess that these other men will not feel called upon to interfere."

Guðmund replied: "I refuse to allow any of my men to provoke them by insult or physical assault."

The others then took horse, set off between the tents and the sea and, in this way, made their way behind Guðmund's party and spurred their horses furiously across the sands. Kálf banged his sword-hilt against his shield and spat as they rode past. Later on Guðmund's men mounted and rode away, but as they were riding up the hill slopes they could see Þorstein's men drawn up in battle formation ahead of them.

Kálf exclaimed: "Now, surely, we must engage them and not let them get away—and we have now only half the advantage that we had before."

Guðmund repeated his order that no one from his side should provoke a fight, but he said that they should do their best if the others attacked. Guðmund's men continued on their way home—without further incident. Þorstein's party had halted when they did, because some wished to attack and some did not. During the summer Þorvald came from the south and announced the awards that had been entrusted to him. Þorgrím was also present at this peace meeting. Þorvald awarded thirty hundreds (of silver) for each of the sons of Arnþrúð and balanced this against Þorfinn Önundarson's death. He awarded ten hundreds for Valgarð's wound, but twenty hundreds for the plunder and attack on Guðmund's house. They also had to take back everything that had been stolen, the shields and the weapons. He awarded twelve hundreds (of silver) for the wounding of Urða-Stein. Þorgrím rode away from this peace-meeting, and when he and his men had gone a short distance, Máni Grímsson raced down towards them from Auðbrekka. Víga-Starkað, in Þorgrím's party, asked him: "Why are you racing so fast?"

Máni said he was looking for his horse.

Starkað replied: "Surely you don't imagine your horse is here?"

Máni said that he wouldn't look any further until he had made sure of that. At this Starkað struck him across the thigh, reaching over the pommel with his hand-axe, and dealt Máni a severe wound. Þorgrím then drove Starkað out of his party and assured him that they would never be reconciled because of this act.

Starkað rode east into the fjord and then south across the country. Teit came from the fjords in the east and announced the awards that he had been asked to make. He awarded thirty hundreds (of silver) for the death of each of the sons of Þórð because he reckoned them to be of similar value, and balanced this against their ransack in Arnarnes. Teit's party continued on their journey and stayed with Guðmund on the Friday night of the autumn Ember-days.[29] Þorvald warned them of the rumor that the men from the upper fjord planned to attack him in that house and Teit departed on the Saturday.

On Sunday evening Guðmund, following his usual custom, was in church. The weather was calm and clear and he could hear that a large number of horses were being ridden across the river by the side of the home-meadow. He went inside and roused up his men. Klæng Arnþrúðarson was the first to rush out of doors with another man. They ran up on the roof of the farmhouse and out to the door-jamb,[30] because they thought the first attack would come from there. Þorstein Jónsson and Þorgrím had then reached the outskirts of the defense works with a hundred men. Four men advanced from the invaders—Sigurð grikk, Fálki Dálksson, Þorgeir Helgason (from the south), and Hall Þorbjarnarson (from Skagafjörð), who was an outlaw. They all made their way to the defense works, trying to find the secret entrance into the works, but without any success. Guðmund came outside by this concealed door with a man called Þorkel. This was about dawn and they were looking into the first glimmer of day which was appearing beneath the buildings. Guðmund could see the men, but having poor eyesight, he could not recognize them and asked who they were. Fálki answered: "Here are some guests."

Guðmund replied: "Not very welcome guests, I fancy."

He carried a shield before him, with a halberd in the other hand and a sword at his belt. Guðmund attacked them and they retreated back, through a gap in the fence, inside the defense works. Klæng and his companion noticed that there was a rumpus behind the buildings and rushed across to help. Fálki was killed by Guðmund, while Klæng dealt Hall his death blow; Þorgeir, too, was killed. Sigurð grikk and Guðmund engaged in conflict and fought for quite a while; they fought with swords but neither was wounded. After this Guðmund's men came rushing out of the house and Sigurð drew back outside the defense works. Grím, one of Guðmund's retainers, fell from the defenses into a brook that flowed beneath the walls and those outside saw him but assumed it was one of their own men. Grím made his way to the gate, which the women were guarding, and managed to get back inside.

After this the invaders attacked the defense works, wounding Guðmund and Klæng and many more besides. But as the sun rose, the attackers were dazzled and bemused. They thought that men were attacking them from all directions. What they could see were the peat-stacks and stack-yards, which were covered by moving mist which came up from the mere and curled over the tops of the stacks. They were thoroughly disorganized by these illusions and fled, leaving behind their three dead companions.

They rode down along the valley, making for Langahlíð in order to capture Þorgeir, Guðmund's kinsman, who lived there. They rode in wild disorder, and before they realized where they were, they had long since passed the estate at Langahlíð. They decided, instead, to ride towards Auðbrekka and kill Kálf Guttormsson. Sigurð grikk rode ahead of them, took Kálf into the church, and then stood outside the church and swore that he would defend him as long as he could stand up. Þorstein Jónsson wished to break into the church, or else set fire to it, but Þorgrím would not agree. They broke into the farm buildings, took Kálf's horse, loaded it with food, and then rode off with it and made their way inland up the fjord. (Meanwhile Guðmund had Fálki moved to Bægisá and buried there. Hall and Þorgeir were taken to Hválgrafir and buried there.)

The next morning, when day broke, Þorgrím's army returned to Auðbrekka to seize Kálf, who had already gone across to join Guðmund. But Þórð from Laufás was there with ninety men and they were stationed inside the defense works with their horses. The invaders mounted an attack, but it came to nothing. They went to the byre and led out eight cows which they took away with them. Those defending the earth works could not prevent this because they had insufficient troops to descend and fight. The invaders then rode inland to Grund and set up camp there.

Guðmund collected all the men he could get; he sent word to Kolbein and to all those who were most likely to help him. He then marched inland to Grund with his army and pitched his tents in the meadow—but Þorgrím's men had removed all supplies away before Guðmund's force arrived. Ögmund sneis joined

Guðmund at Grund with forty men, Guðmund decided not to attack during the day until Kolbein had arrived. Guðmund's force then numbered six hundred. They made protective shields of wickerwork and with these held above them, they took long-handled scythes and hooks, and dragged away at the defense-wattles until they had opened up a way through. Then they set fire to one or two buildings. Inside the defense works were almost a hundred well-armed men, but their counsels were confused because each put forward his own plan and no one was prepared to recognize anyone else as their leader. Guðmund's army attacked as soon as they had all arrived and all of those who were equipped to do so let fly with arrows and crossbows. When the missiles rained down on them a certain deacon, who was inside the defense works, urged them to direct their attack against Guðmund. Soon after, a crossbow bolt struck the deacon and ground into his eyebrow,[31] piercing through the bone; and they failed to get it out until they had made a vow to Bishop Þorlák. At last the defenders realized that they could not win and they offered to grant a truce to Guðmund.

He replied: "It is useless to arrange a truce with you, nor will I agree to one unless I am given a free hand to decide my own terms."

Thereupon they agreed to a peace on these terms and each man gave his word to abide by the terms that Guðmund should impose. When the formalities were agreed to, Þorstein Jónsson descended from the defenses to meet Kolbin and they conversed for a long time. Guðmund then announced his terms: first, they had to pay all the fines that had been awarded in settlement during the summer and had not yet been paid. He then stated his terms for the crimes that had been committed since that earlier settlement. The terms of this settlement were met completely, with the result that men said that Þorgrím was left penniless. All of those who were with him, and were of any financial standing, made some contribution to the fines. Guðmund ordered Þorstein Jónsson and Þorlák Ketilsson to leave the district, and the latter went south to Hítardal where he owned the entitlement to an estate. When it was all settled, Þorgrím moved

west to Skagafjörð and spent the first winter with Ísleif in Geldingaholt.

24

Þórð returned home from the meeting at Laufás with his servants and that same evening he met one of the servants, Þorvarð kamphund, out of doors by the side of a brook. He was sharpening his axe and showed it to Þórð who said: "A fine edge, if you dared to use it."

Two Norwegian brothers were lodging with Þórð, one was Sörli and the other, Þorkel. They were the sons of Handar-Bassi and had disliked Þorvarð and made a laughing-stock of him that summer. Þorvarð went indoors where men were sitting around the fire and he dealt Sörli his deathblow. As he rushed towards the door, Þórð, who was sitting on a chair, sprang up and Þorvarð fell at his feet. At this, Þorkel Bassason aimed a stroke at him and then attacked him with another man. Þorvarð managed to escape out of doors, reached a boat, got it afloat, and rowed across the fjord. He made his way to Auðbrekka, where he was put to bed with his wounds until they healed.

There was another Þórð who lived on a farm called Fagraskóg to the west of Eyjafjörð. He looked after a cow that belonged to Guðmund dýri and, having slaughtered it during the autumn, he marked another instead with Guðmund's permission. In the spring Guðmund sent two men to fetch the cow, one was Haf Þórarinsson and the other was also called Guðmund—an ordained man who was not quite twenty years old. When they came to Fagraskóg, Þórð would not let them take the marked cow, and offered one of his others that were of less value, and argued that this was a better bargain. Haf would accept nothing except the cow with Guðmund's mark. Þórð was a tall and powerful man with a filthy temper and they wrestled over the cow without either of them gaining an advantage. Guðmund rushed up to them and dealt Þórð a severe wound—and they left him lying there by the peat pits, some little way from the house. They took their cow and informed the people on the next farm where Þórð

could be found, if he was wanted for anything. He continued to live from breakfast time to midday.

When these two returned to Guðmund dýri that evening, Haf told him the news and he said: "I can see that you don't like to make a fruitless journey."

Later, Guðmund paid full compensation for the killing of Þórð.

25

Klæng and Brand, the sons of Arnþrúð, lived at Sakka in Svarfaðardal while their father, Eyjólf, had a farm at Vellir which he had taken over on condition that the estate was passed on as part of his inheritance. But when Eyjólf died, Bishop Brand refused to allow the estate to pass to the sons of Eyjólf; instead, Þorstein Þraslaugarson took it over—and he had married the bishop's kinswoman. After this the sons of Arnþrúð claimed the estate, but Þorstein refused to give it up.

One Sunday at Vellir, Klæng and Þorstein made a rush at each other, but the people who were there were able to prevent them wounding each other. After this incident Þorstein rode west to Hólar and informed the Bishop, who told him to return home and obtain the services of Snorri Þórðarson as a bodyguard; he was the nephew of Víga-Starkað who had killed Þorstein Arnþrúðarson, as we have recorded earlier in this book. A parish meeting was held at Háls in Svarfaðardal to celebrate the Elevation of the Cross September 14th and during the day, as men were sitting in the living room, Klæng struck off Snorri's leg, below the knee. Immediately a man called Grím attacked and killed Snorri outright. Þorstein rode off once again to Hólar and told the Bishop what had happened. But the sons of Arnþrúð called on Guðmund dýri and asked him to help them in the defense of their father's estate. He refused to join them but advised them to seek the support of their near-kinsman Ögmund sneis, and added that he was quite ready to allow his own son, Þorvald, to accompany them. They rode away to meet Ögmund who rode back with them and gave orders to carry everything of value from the farm buildings into the church—and to place in the

churchyard anything that would not go into the church. It was a large and extensive church enclosure, not so close to the houses that it could be easily attacked from them by spears and crossbows. Afterwards they fortified the churchyard with huge rafters and prepared to offer resistance there. They then divided their forces into defense groups, if the need should arise. There were thirty defenders in all, under the captaincy of Ögmund.

The Bishop gathered a force of men in another place and, of those men of any note who joined him, the man who came furthest from the west was Hjálm Ásbjarnarson. The Bishop fully intended to ride with them but at night, when they were at Hólar, he had severe pains in his face and was unfit to travel. After this they rode away from Hólar, almost one hundred and fifty strong, under the leadership of Kolbein Arnórsson and his foster son, Haf Brandsson. When they reached Vellir, they held parley with Ögmund who told them to expect resistance from those who were with him and insisted that they would not give up the estate. Haf argued that it was quite inadvisable to assault the churchyard because those who attacked would be in the wrong—even though the churchyard had been defiled—while those who chose to defend the churchyard would have right on their side. They stayed on there for two nights, but they could get no lodgings (or provisions) from the locality because all the men in that district were in favor of Ögmund's party. Ögmund then gave them a cow for slaughter and, having no cauldron for boiling, they roasted it on a spit. The only thing they achieved was a peace settlement for the killing of Snorri and, when the fine had been paid, they rode away.

Later, Guðmund dýri came over and removed the sons of Arnþrúð from the estate and sought a meeting with the Bishop. It was finally agreed that the Bishop should place his own nominee as a tenant of the farm during the tenant's lifetime, after which the estate should revert to the sons of Arnþrúð. It was further stipulated that Þorstein should not be the nominated tenant. Þorkel Þórarinsson took over the farm and lived there until his death, after which the sons of Arnþrúð acquired the estate.

It happened that a man called Skæring Hróaldsson was injured; he was a consecrated deacon and a relation of Guðmund dýri. Some Norwegian merchants had cut off his hand, after which Guðmund was awarded the right to make his own award for this injury. He and Haf Brandsson valued the damage at thirty hundreds and asked for immediate payment. After making the award, Guðmund rode away from the ship. The Norwegians remained behind with Haf and said the fine was excessive and urged him either to reduce the fine or else to swear an oath of compurgation. Haf refused to accept either alternative. Messengers rode after Guðmund and told him what had happened, and he turned back to the ship at once and asked Haf what was going on.

Haf told him the exact position and Guðmund replied: "By all means swear an oath, or else let me do it, but they must now pay sixty hundreds. Any oath that is sworn by you or by me must be valued the same as Skæring's hand."

The Norwegians were not prepared to accept this.

Guðmund said: "I will make you a different offer: I will pay you the thirty hundreds which have been valued as the fine, and I will choose a man from your number, someone who seems to me to be the equal of Skæring, and I will cut off his hand, and then you can offer him whatever miserably inadequate compensation you choose."

This was even less to the merchants' taste and they paid the fine at once. Guðmund took Skæring away with him from the ship.

After this incident Guðmund did not live long at Bakki before he moved west and entered the monastery at Þingeyr as a monk, where he died[32] and so brought his fame and reputation to an end. And at this point I must leave his saga.

The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson

The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson

Now it is time to take up the story again where we left it, and report that when Bishop Guðmund and Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson came back to Iceland after having been one winter in Norway, Hrafn went west to Arnarfjörð, to his homestead in Eyr. But before they parted Bishop Guðmund gave Hrafn a good stud-horse and sun-stone.[2]

Hrafn had not long been home when he went to Vatnsfjörð to visit Þorvald Snorrason; from him he accepted a good stud-horse, and they again promised friendship with one another. Shortly afterwards Þorvald went to visit at Eyr and accepted gracious gifts from Hrafn at that time.

12

There was a woman named Ragnheið who was the daughter of Aron, the son of Bárð svarti. She lived in Selárdal. A rorqual drifted ashore there and when Þorvald learned of this he went over to ask Ragnheið to sell him the whale. She let him have twelve weights,[3] saying that he should pay her an equal amount when a drift-whale came in to his shore. Þorvald never after repaid her for that whale.

When he left Selárdal he put up at the homestead which is called Lokinhamrar. Some of the whale was stolen there and the theft was later proved to be the work of one of Hrafn's Þingmen who lived at Sléttanes. When Hrafn was aware of this he offered to pay Þorvald for his Þingman's act whatever Þorvald wished to stipulate for the theft. Þorvald however would accept no compensation from Hrafn but instead stole from the man who had taken the whale. After this Þorvald molested Hrafn's Þingmen from time to time.

There was a man named Hauk, known as Víga-Hauk, the son of Orm Fornason. He came of a northern family but had married in the west, at Rauðasand, where he won Hallbera, the daughter of Markús Gíslason; then he moved to Loft's to live.[4] When Gísli Markússon grew up he asked his brother Loft to repay the money which Magnús and his brother owed. In accordance with Gísli's request, Loft, because he was illegitimate, repaid this both in land and in cash. Since Loft now had no home he went north to Mýrar in Dýrafjörð. There was a man named Mög living there, a Þingman of Hrafn's; and Hrafn had an option on Mög's property. Loft bought the property without asking Hrafn and moved his household there. Víga-Hauk moved to Mýrar with Loft.

Hrafn was not pleased that Loft had purchased the property and settled there, for Loft was a haughty and overbearing person. Loft spoke disparagingly about Hrafn and his Þingmen, saying it was of no importance to him whether they were pleased or displeased by his settling there. Hrafn then went to Mýrar with a large group of men. Þorvald Snorrason also came with seven others, offered his help to Hrafn, and joined his following. Men tried to effect a reconciliation but Loft was reluctant. Hrafn and his men then began to drain off a brook which brought water to the household at Mýrar. Loft was frightened now lest they set fire to the buildings and burn the homestead. Hauk tried for a reconciliation and they finally agreed that Sigvat Sturluson should arbitrate between them. After this meeting Loft's and Hauk's feelings ran high against Þorvald because he had openly supported Hrafn. In the following summer, at the Alþing, Hauk ran at Þorvald and struck him between the shoulders, but Þorvald was not wounded for he was wearing a byrnie. Then Hauk struck at one of Þorvald's companions, a man named Teit—he was the son of Árni rauðskegg. The blow fell on Teit's hand; at first it was not considered much of a wound but later he lost his hand at the wrist.

They reached a reconciliation in their case at that Þing. But later it came out that Loft and Gísli had been in a plot against Þorvald's life and that they had promised to pay the fines for

Hauk if he assaulted Þorvald. When Loft knew that Þorvald was not wounded he refused to pay any fine, but Hauk thought that they should pay it inasmuch as he had made an attempt on Þorvald's life.

Because of Þorvald's enmity Loft now thought it dangerous for him to remain in Dýrafjörð. Therefore he went south, when men were returning from the Þing, to his kinsmen Eyjólf óði Þorsteinsson, the father of his wife Álfdís; he stayed there for the summer and the first part of the winter.

That summer Þorvald went west in Dýrafjörð to the Leet-þing[5] to demand the fines which were owing for Hauk. But the payment was not forthcoming. Then Þorvald asked Hrafn to go with him to Mýrar to plunder there, but Hrafn did not want to join such an expedition; he said he would support Þorvald lawfully but not unlawfully. He said that Þorvald should prosecute Loft and Gísli legally, for plotting against his life and for withholding the payment of fines, and said that he would support Þorvald in this. After that Þorvald went to Mýrar where he plundered a good deal; Hrafn reproached him for this. This was then recited:

1. The tale is told me
Of thieves and villains
Who stole twenty head
Of Mýrar's cattle!
Infamous their fame—
Weaponless winning
Neither land nor cattle—
Ill luck for warriors.

In the winter, after Christmas, Loft went west to Mýrar at the urging of Sighvat Sturluson and his kinsman Eyjólf. When Þorvald heard of this he went to Mýrar with a large following. Friends of Loft learned of Þorvald's journey; they gathered a force and came to Mýrar just after Þorvald had arrived and tried to bring about a reconciliation between them. When Þorvald saw that Loft had more supporters there than he, he accepted a reconciliation with Loft; then he departed. When Þorvald had gone away Loft did not trust to remaining in Mýrar; he went to

Hrafn in Eyr, saying that Sighvat had sent him with a request for help; Sighvat was then considered a friend of Hrafn. Hrafn now took in Loft and Þorvald was not pleased by this.

Þorvald sent a message to Hrafn saying that he should come to meet him in Dýrafjörð at the homestead known as Grandi. Hrafn arrived there, with two other men, ahead of Þorvald and waited for him inside. Þorvald arrived with several men and asked Hrafn to come outside. When Hrafn came out with his companions, Tómas Ragnheiðarson and Sturla Bárðarson, Þorvald's men had drawn themselves up before the doorway while Þorvald himself stood a little way off with his sword drawn from its scabbard. Hrafn and his companions walked out along the narrow aisle between the men up to Þorvald. Hrafn greeted Þorvald and kissed him and Þorvald returned this greeting. But Þorvald did not speak a word to Hrafn who thought this odd and did not at all understand why Þorvald had come.

Later, Loft bought a place called Stakkar, in Rauðasand, and settled down them. Víga-Hauk and his wife Hallbera left the country then, going first to Norway and from there to Greenland. Wherever he went Víga-Hauk was considered a man of note. Magnús Markússon also went to Greenland then, and none of them ever returned.

There was a man named Guðmund Hallsson, a landloper and an overbearing fellow. He became a follower of Gísli Markússon. Galti was the name of a friend of Loft; he owned a good horse which Gísli and Guðmund were eager to buy but he refused to sell it to them and gave it to Loft. When Guðmund learned of that he proposed to steal the horse. Loft saw Guðmund taking the horse along by the yard and went after him with three men. Loft and these men then killed Guðmund.

That case of manslaughter was submitted to Sighvat Sturluson. For the slaying of Guðmund he sentenced Loft to exile from the West Fjords Quarter along with the fellows who had acted with him, and also stipulated a large fine. Loft left the West Fjords then and went to the southern part of the country to his kinsman Eyjólf; he was for a long time afterwards under the protection of the family at Oddi.

At that time hostility between Hrafn and Þorvald increased greatly because of the injustices which Þorvald began to inflict on Hrafn's Þingmen. Þorvald foisted a beggar on one of Hrafn's Þingmen and then went to see Hrafn, asking him to send the beggar away. But Hrafn gathered a large company and went with eighty men north to Ísafjörð; he transferred the beggar to a man named Jósep, who lived in Súðavík. Þorvald knew about this journey and got a small boat in Súðavík; he hid it in a creek and stayed there while Hrafn was in Súðavík. Hrafn left the beggar behind in Súðavík. His companions composed this:

2. We bring a mighty one
In tribute to Jósep;
Soon to be king
In Súðavík's realm.

After that Hrafn went home.

In the West Fjords there were then many kinds of dreams and visions. Once when Hrafn had been on a family visit in Selárdal he departed early in the morning, accompanied by two other men. They saw a great light coming toward them from the east, from the homesteads at Eyr. Hrafn saw three men in the light, and thought he recognized himself and his two companions. He told few men of this vision.

There was a man named Þórð, a homeman in Selárdal. He dreamed that a black, scowling man appeared to him, and Þórð thought he asked who the man was, and the fellow said:

3. Far-traveler I'm called,
Of an ancient line,
Ever traitor to peace;
Ever sorrowful death
I bring to all men,
And feast on their bodies.

Guðmund was the name of a man who dreamed that a man—black, large, scowling—came to him. He thought he asked what man he was and the man answered:

"Ingólf has now come here, he who appeared to you in a dream before the slaying of Markús."[6]

Guðmund asked, "Do you now bring news as bad as that?"

And the man replied:

4. I rejoice in such terror
—Sorrow torments this people—
As unrest increases
With increase of grief.
Now I fare south,
South with my band;
And have left the north
Where I shaped dark death.

There was a man named Eyjólf Snorrason. He dreamed that he thought he went outdoors and he thought he saw as many moons as stars in the heavens, some full, some half, some waxing and some waning. And as he wondered at this sight he thought he saw a man standing beside him. The man said:

5. See them all tremble
Among their homesteads—
Sin-driven souls
Of men in torment.
The spirit shivers
At the serpent's mouth,
The strong sun quivers
And I urge you—awake!

He remembered the dream when he woke up.

There was a man named Jón Þorsteinsson, a homeman at the farmstead named Kúla. A man named Kjartan was living there. And there was a man named Símon Bjarnarson, a homeman of Hrafn, who had a mistress and child at Kúla. Jón seduced the woman. One holy day Símon went to meet his mistress; he was sitting in talk with her when Jón attacked him and struck him fatally. For that killing Hrafn sentenced Jón to full outlawry.[7]

Somewhat later Jón threw himself on Hrafn's mercy and Hrafn spared him. Jón was grateful that Hrafn had not taken his miser-

able life and thanked him for his mercy. Hrafn later offered compensation for the slaying of his kinsman Símon and he himself procured Jón's immunity.

15

One spring Þorvald went to Arnarfjörð with a company of men. When they came down to the edge of the heath, at the head of Arnarfjörð, a woman named Ástríð observed their progress. She was the daughter of Gunnar, a son of Bárð svarti, and she lived on a small farmstead there. When she saw the company of men she sent her son to Eyr to let Hrafn know about it. As soon as Hrafn learned this he sent a message to Selárdal to Ragnheið's sons Eyvind and Tómas bidding them come to his assistance with all the men they could bring. At once they gathered a force and put out in their boats. Hrafn stationed men in front of the house with their weapons, had all the doors opened, but shot the bolts across on the inside of them. Hrafn had a bow and used it well. Þorvald brought fire up to the house and lit it in front of the doorways which he thought least well-guarded, as well as across the whole roof. But those who were inside brought water and sour whey to the fire and slaked it as best they could.

Hrafn asked who had started the fire and Þorvald said he had. Hrafn asked what his reasons were for setting fire to his buildings. Þorvald said Hrafn had been in a plot against his life when he had transferred the beggar to Súðavík. Hrafn said this was not true—

"Because I know where you and your boat were while I was in Súðavík; I had then so large a troop that I had you entirely at my mercy if I had wished to act against you. And I also know that when you were at Holt in Önundarfjörð I had a large enough troop to do whatever harm I wished to you. It is now time to consider what we must do so that you will not burn down our homestead."

Þorvald answered: "You must promise to give me self-judgment[8] in all those lawsuits which I am going to have proclaimed against you."

Hrafn said that he would not bind himself to grant self-judgment, "For I shall soon find that I am not short of men."

They continued to fight one another for a while but Þorvald and his men could not burn down the homestead because of the defense. Then they saw a ship filled with men and weapons coming in along Arnarfjörð, and Þorvald asked Hrafn if he would submit their case to someone else to arbitrate. But Hrafn was reluctant to do this for he knew that he had hope of support now. Several men then took part in trying to reconcile them and stipulated that Hrafn should have the right to name as arbitrators whoever would most satisfy him. Þorvald was by that time eager for a reconciliation. The quarrel came to an end on the understanding that Þorð Sturluson was to arbitrate everything in their case. After that Þorvald went off hastily.

Forces now poured in to Hrafn, the men of Selárdal and many others. Some were most insistent that they should ride after Þorvald and kill him because it was so obvious that he had planned to take Hrafn's life; but Hrafn would not have this. Hrafn was much criticized for this: Guðmund Galtason said to his sister Guðrún when she asked what he had heard men say about Hrafn's affairs:

6. I hear Hrafn is scorned
For speaking for peace;
Men on this earth, my sister,
Mistrust such trust.
But I among men
Sole truth can tell—
In counsel and action
Prudence guides this leader.

When Þorvald returned to Ísafjörð he told an entirely different story of his meeting with Hrafn from what had happened.

16

The following summer Hrafn and Þorvald each rode to the Alþing with a large force. Their case was brought up at the Þing and at first all the testimony was to Hrafn's advantage;

but all Þorvald's men then testified in his favor, with the single exception of a man named Vermund who testified in favor of Hrafn. Their case was not arbitrated at that Þing.

The following winter a whale came into Strandir to land which Hrafn owned and the man who found the whale told Þorvald about it. Þorvald decided that the man who found the whale should proclaim that it had come up on common land and that he had therefore taken possession of it legally. Þorvald then went out to the whale, had it flensed and carried home.

When Hrafn learned about this he sent men south to his kinsman, Hall the Lawspeaker, and to Þorvald Gizurarson, Hall's brother, to ask their advice about how he could straighten out this affair with Þorvald. They advised him to prepare a case for the Dýrafjörð Þing against Þorvald and those men who had profited from the whale, and to prosecute them according to law. The messengers came back and told Hrafn this proposal.

17

The following spring Hrafn prepared the lawsuit against Þorvald and all those men who had profited from the whale. Sturla, a son of Bárð Snorrason and of Þórdís Sturla's daughter, prosecuted the suit against Þorvald. At that Þing Þorvald was sentenced to full outlawry along with nine other men who had profited from the whale with him.

The next summer Þorvald rode to the Alþing with a large following. Hrafn did not attend the Þing that summer but Sturla Bárðarson went in Hrafn's name and joined the following of Þórð Sturluson. Sturla proclaimed the outlawry of Þorvald and of those men who had been outlawed in the case about the whale. That summer Hrafn went north to Ísafjörð and took over the confiscated property of those of Þorvald's men who had been outlawed. When Þorvald came home from the Þing, he quickly gathered men from all around Ísafjörð, collecting over a hundred. Many joined the company of necessity. Þorvald sent one of his followers, named Kolbein, to meet a poor bóndi named Ámundi. He was a very poor man and a Þingman of Hrafn.

Þorvald ordered Kolbein and his companions to force Ámundi to join them and take part in Þorvald's attack on Hrafn. If he should refuse, said Þorvald, they were to kill him. Kolbein and his companions came upon Ámundi in a hay field where he was scything while his wife was raking the hay together after him; she carried a swaddling-child whom she was suckling. Kolbein and his men demanded that Ámundi join Þorvald in Eyr against Hrafn. Ámundi said he would have no hand in any expedition which would displease Hrafn. Then Kolbein and his men killed Ámundi, went away to meet Þorvald and told him of the slaying.

When Þorvald arrived in Dýrafjörð, some women went quickly to Eyr and told Hrafn of Þorvald's journey. Hrafn at once sent messages to Eyvind in Selárdal bidding him come to his aid. Hrafn also sent men to Barðaströnd to Steinólf the priest, Ljót's son, and to Gellir Þorsteinsson. They returned with as many men as they had been able to collect. Hrafn had had an outwork built of stones from around his homestead. Þorvald reached Eyr with one hundred men but when he saw Hrafn's preparations it seemed to him difficult to attack. He sat down with his forces on a hillside a short distance from the outwork.

Eyvind Þórarinsson had gathered a force throughout Tálknafjörð and the valley in Arnarfjörð and they traveled by ship to Eyr. When Þorvald saw the ship coming he went down to the shore with his following. Eyvind saw Þorvald's group at the landing-place ahead and told his men that they were not to go ashore. Þorvald asked who was in command of that ship's company and was told Eyvind Þórarinsson was their leader. Þorvald called to Eyvind and asked him to bring the ship right in—"For I want to talk to you."

Eyvind told him to speak from there if he had anything to say— "For I have nothing to say to you."

Þorvald made no reply. And when those who were up in the outwork saw Þorvald's company facing the ship's company, Eyvind's brothers Halldór and Tómas left the outwork with a large company to meet Eyvind. When Þorvald saw them coming he left the shore. Eyvind and his men came ashore then and joined forces with Tómas and his men; they went to the outwork to

Hrafn who then had three hundred men. Some men then talked to Hrafn, urging that they attack Þorvald and kill him and claiming they might never have a better chance. But Hrafn said that he meant to honor the Apostle St. James and not fight against Þorvald. (That was the eve of the Feast of St. James.)

Þorvald now summoned Steinólf the priest to come to him. He went to meet with Þorvald, they talked privately for a long time, and then the priest Steinólf went back and forth between the outwork and the others trying to arrange a reconciliation. On the following morning Áli auðgi, Odd's son, also came and with Steinólf tried to effect a reconciliation; and eventually Hrafn and Þorvald were reconciled.

The terms of their agreement were that Þorvald Gizurarson and Þórð Sturluson were to arbitrate in their lawsuits. Þorvald then thanked all the men who had negotiated their settlement.

"I," said Þorvald, "am now happy that we are reconciled. For it seems to me that we will not be at the mercy of any single chieftain if we two are of one mind."

Þorvald and his men all ate their main meal there at Hrafn's invitation. He provided mounts for them to travel north across the heath to Dýrafjörð. Þorvald gave Hrafn a warm farewell in parting. Their litigations ceased then for the following summer and winter.

18

The following spring, Hrafn went south to Reykjaholt in Borgarfjörð to the peace-meeting which Þorvald and Hrafn had arranged with one another. But Þorvald did not come to this meeting. Þorvald Gizurarson and Þörð Sturluson came for they were to arbitrate the case of Hrafn and Þorvald; but it seemed to them they could not reach a verdict in the case if Þorvald was not present. They thought Þorvald had violated the agreement by not coming as had been agreed. In the following autumn Þórð Sturluson sent word to Hrafn and Þorvald that they should come to Fagrdal in Skarðströnd if they wanted a settlement. Hrafn came to this meeting but Þorvald did not.

Hrafn went to Barðaströnd to the wedding of Hauk Þorgilsson

with Oddný, the daughter of Steinólf the priest. The priest Eyvind Þórarinsson was also there. When Eyvind left the wedding he went out across the heath to Arnarfjörð. And when he and his men came near Forsfjörð they saw a fire flaming up from the sea beaches, as broad as a hay field. They saw it for a long time and meant to go out to it but the tide had flooded the lower part of the river there. They then went up along the river and saw the fire just as clearly. It was evening and the weather was snowy so that the river was high. When they had crossed the river the fire had vanished. Some men from Selárdal had rowed out to sea; they saw the fire out on the water and a little later they saw blood on their clothing but did not know where it came from.

Men saw blood then in many places where they did not expect to. There was a man named Þorbjörn, the son of Magnús, who lived in Valþjófsdal. He went out during the night before the Feast of St. Ambrose in the winter when Hrafn died. In the sky to the south he saw a fire moving from the southern region toward the west. And following the fire he saw a man riding a white horse; he rode with long stirrups. He had a white shield, a helmet on his head, a great halberd in his hand, and he carried his spear forward between the horse's ears. He saw that the spear extended beyond the horse in the front and in the rear. Then he saw another man riding behind. He had a reddish horse and a half-white, half-red shield. He, too, had a helmet on his head, was armed with a sword and had a great spear in his hand; he carried this spear as the first rider did. He saw a third man riding in just such a way as the former, but he had a dark horse, a black shield, and clothing black as jet. He wore what might have been a bishop's mitre on his head. Þorbjörn saw this scene so clearly that he noted all the gaits of the horses and also how the riders rode with long stirrups and straight leg.

That same winter, on the eighth night of Christmas, it happened in Eyr that a man named Þórarin saw a man standing in front of Hrafn's table at mealtime. He was big, had a helmet on his head, a sword in his hand, and pressed the point of his sword down on the table before him; he stood there a while

and then went away. Þórarin was sitting next to Hrafn when he had this vision. Hallkatla, the daughter of Einar, one time when she was at church, saw a great light at home below the outwork. There was a man named Jón who also saw a light, and yet other men had visions of a light during that winter. In the winter, after Christmas, Pétur and Sturla, Bárð's sons, went north to Súðavík and seized the bóndi named Jósep and his son Einar. They had both been outlawed in the case about the whale. Sturla and Pétur brought these men to Hrafn but he gave them both quarter and was not pleased that they had been brought down to him.

19

That spring, during Lent, Þorvald traveled south from Ísafjörð with thirty-two men. They went from Glámuheið to Arnarfjörð, and when they came down to the end of the fjord at Arnarfjörð among the homesteads they tied up all the men in the farmsteads they came to so that no news of them was borne ahead to Eyr. But those who suffered this ill-treatment were not silent; children wept, and their mothers and fathers could not help them because they themselves were bound.

In one farmstead those who were bound, while they chanted holy songs, begged the holy Bishop Þorlák that they might be freed. And when they had earnestly made their entreaty the bonds of one of those who were bound sprang apart; then he released others and they all went to other farmsteads where they released the other prisoners.

Hrafn was accustomed to post a guard every night. That evening, when Þorvald and his men were coming from the heath, Hrafn asked his homemen who was to hold guard. They said there was no need to post a guard, for the weather was bad, and there was a snow storm; they said too that no one would be roaming about the district in such foul weather and, furthermore, no one would attack them during Lent.

Hrafn said that even so he thought it better there should be a guard. That night no guard was posted, though one had been every night until then. But when Hrafn had gone to bed he

could not sleep. He asked a man named Steingrím to recite the *Andréas-drápa*.[9] And after each verse, Hrafn talked a good deal about the events which had occurred during the Passion of the Holy Apostle Andréas. Then, that same night, Tómas in Selárdal dreamt that he witnessed the Passion of the Holy Apostle Andréas. And he dreamt the same thing all night every time he fell asleep again.

That same night Þorvald arrived in Eyr. When his forces came to the stronghold they placed a man named Bárð on a shield, and lifted the shield up in the air on the points of their spears so that he could climb down into the stronghold. Bárð went to the doors of the stronghold and drew back the bolts; Þorvald and his men then entered the entrenchment. At this moment Hrafn arose, because he could not sleep, and looked outside. When he opened the doors, he saw that armed men had entered the outworks. Hrafn shut the doors, went inside, and told his men that many men had got into the stronghold with weapons, "For you have not held good watch this night."

Þorvald and his men then brought wood up before all the doors, set fire to it, and to all the roof-thatch. When Hrafn's men had got into their clothes they went to the doors and Hrafn asked who was in charge of the fire. Þorvald's men replied that those who lit the fire were in charge of it but that Þorvald was the leader. Hrafn asked if Þorvald would accept any agreement with them, saying that Þorvald could specify the terms himself, if he would only give quarter to all those present. Þorvald's men replied that Hrafn and his men did not deserve quarter. Þorvald made no reply at all though his men made many foolish comments on the situation. Hrafn asked where Þorvald was and why he made no reply: "I expect the best from him of any of you, for I think I have deserved well at his hands."

Þorvald made no reply. Then Hrafn asked his priest, named Valdi, and those clerics with him, to go into the hall and sing matins. Hrafn himself sang matins with them and while they were singing, dense smoke began to fill the buildings. Then Hrafn went to the door and asked Þorvald to grant quarter to the women and children, so that they might go out:

"And I offer you, for myself, whatever settlement you wish; I will hansel an agreement with you to leave the country and go on pilgrimage to Rome, for both our sakes, and never return to Iceland, if you think this will bring you more honor than before."

Þorvald refused this. Then Hrafn offered to give himself up, for the sake of quarter granted to all the other men who were there in the farmstead, and so that the farmstead would not be burnt down.

Þorvald replied: "I will give all the other men here leave to come out, if you will first lay down your weapons and yield me the right to do as I wish to each of you."

Hrafn and his men now handed over all their weapons, and after that the men and women went out. But when Hrafn came out he was seized and held. Sturla Bárðarson, his sister's son, was also seized, and a third man named Þórð Vífilsson. But all the others, men and women, were led to the church and locked in. Þorvald now announced that Hrafn was to be put to death. When Hrafn heard this sentence he asked that he might make confession and receive the Sacrament. He went to Confession with the priest Valdi, made a full and sincere confession to him and received the Corpus Domini, falling to his knees with tears of deep repentance.

Þorvald ordered Kolbein Bergsson to kill Hrafn but he refused. Then Þorvald told Bárð Bárðarson to kill Hrafn. Hrafn laid himself down, braced himself against his knees and elbows, and laid his neck along a piece of driftwood. Bárð struck off his head against the wood. This event took place below the outworks where the light had been seen earlier in the winter. Þorvald had one leg struck from Sturla Bárðarson and also from Þórð Vífilsson.

These events occurred the second day of the second week in Lent, eight days after the Feast of St. Matthew, all in the same winter in which Hall Kleppjárnsson was slain during August. When Hrafn had been slain Þorvald and his men plundered the farmstead at Eyr of all the movables there which were inside the walls, weapons and clothes, house furnishings and food. In this pillage Þorvald and his men took the sun-stone which Bishop

Guðmund had given to Hrafn. They took a boat which the church at Eyr owned, and carried out to it all the spoils which they had seized. But when they had got away the homemen of Eyr found the sun-stone at the flood-mark, where they had loaded the boat. Many men explained this event in this way: Þorvald and his men had not been able to take the sun-stone away with them because it belonged to Bishop Guðmund.

20

In the spring, after Easter, Þorvald went a second time to Arnarfjörð and there plundered many of the Þingmen of Hrafn's sons. Péter Bárðarson had a Þingman of Þorvald's slain; his name was Hermund and he had often been among Hrafn's enemies.

Þorvald sent word to Kár the monk to try to make peace with Hrafn's kinsmen. A peace-meeting was arranged, on the advice of Þórð Sturluson and the monk Kár, at Þingeyr in Dýrafjörð. They reached a reconciliation, on condition that Þórð should arbitrate the case as he wished. Twelve men promised surety for payment of the fine from Þorvald just as Þórð wished to stipulate, and for Þorvald's immunity exactly as Þórð allowed.

The following summer at the Alþing Þórð Sturluson delivered his judgment and passed sentence of outlawry on Þorvald Snorrason: Þorvald was to go abroad that same summer and stay out of the country for five years unless he went on pilgrimage to the Pope, made his peace with him and received absolution from him; in that case he might return home after three years. And if he came back to Iceland after being away that long, he was to have the right to residence in Vatnsfjörð, to a homestead, and to a following of Þingmen. But Þorvald was to be considered an outlaw between Vatnsfjörðará in Breiðafjörð and Stigi in Ísafjörð. And all those men who had gone with him to attack Hrafn were never to enter that territory unless they were forced by shipwreck—and then they were to leave as soon as the sea was safe for a full day's journey. All those Þingmen whom Þorvald had led, who lived in this district, were to leave his following. These men were to leave the country and never return:

Þorgils the Easterner, Steingrím Ásgeirsson, Þórð Gunnarsson, Bárð Bárðarson—and to leave the West Fjords Quarter within the next fortnight from the time they learned this sentence. Bjarni djákn was to be outlawed from the whole land except the East Fjords. Orm Skeggjason was to be allowed neither in Arnarfjörð nor in Ísafjörð, and this was true for Þórð Steinsson also. All other men were to be outlawed from their districts like Þorvald, but without being sent abroad; however they all had to pay fines: three hundreds from each that they might have the right of residence. In addition to these sentences of outlawry Þórð Sturluson stipulated one hundred hundreds for the slaying of Hrafn. That fine was to be paid in goods, in gold or purified silver, or other goods which those who were to receive them thought no less valuable than the other parts of the payment. Sixty hundreds were stipulated for mutilating Sturla; thirty hundreds for the mutilation of Þórð Vífilsson; thirty hundreds for the attack on Péter's life.

For the right of chief prosecution in the case of the slaying of Hrafn, thirty hundreds were stipulated for Hrafn's sister's son, Magnús Þórðarson (he had the right to be chief prosecutor because Hrafn's sons were so young that they could not take on the prosecution of the case). Nevertheless, there will be something to relate about them later.[10] Then two hundred hundreds were paid out as stipulated. The spoils which Þorvald had taken at Eyr and at other places in Arnarfjörð were returned, just as Þórð demanded. Þorvald went abroad and south to Rome, and was away for three years. While Þorvald was abroad Péter Bárðarson had Íma Þorkelsson slain, and had Jón Þorsteinsson's foot cut off because they had been with Þorvald in the attack on Hrafn and had paid no fine for their actions.

Þorvald returned to Iceland after he had been abroad for three years and went to live in Vatnsfjörð.

The Saga of Þórð kakali

The Saga of Þórð kakali

1

Within one year after the death of Snorri Sturluson many important events occurred: Gizur Þorvaldsson went abroad from the southern part of Iceland while Órækja sailed abroad from Eyjafjörð; that autumn Þórð Sighvatsson returned to Iceland, to Gásar, with Jón Sturluson, who was then a child in years; his mother Solveig also returned then with her two daughters. Jón lindiás was captain of the ship.

At that time Kolbein ungi was the greatest chieftain in the north, with firm control of a very large part of the country. When Gizur went abroad he had put his kinsman Hjalti in control; he and Kolbein were to help one another if any disturbance arose either in the north or south. Dufgus' sons Svarthöfði and Kolbein had also been driven abroad, while Björn had to give his oath to Kolbein never to turn against him no matter with whom he had to deal.

Sturla Þórðarson had been seized by force at the Bridge,[1] and with Órækja had either to go abroad or get eleven of the most prominent men from the West Fjords to swear with him the Oath of Twelve[2] to Kolbein that neither he, Sturla, nor any one of them would turn against Kolbein, whether Þórð or anyone else raised an attack against Kolbein. The priest Pál Hallson rode north with the priest Ketil Þorleiksson, Gunnstein Hallsson and his son Vigfús, Þórodd the priest, and all the finest men from those districts which Sturla managed. Sturla took the oath as did these men with him and then they rode back home.

That same summer Einar Þorvaldsson and Þórdís Snorri's daughter along with the most prominent bóndis all rode north-

east from Ísafjörð to meet Kolbein, and from him they received a fair welcome and good gifts. At parting they all agreed to everything Kolbein wished or demanded. Einar Jónsson and Einar dragi then rode west with them, together with six of Kolbein's followers. When they reached Stað in Steingrímsfjörð they sent a messenger to Ásgrím Bergþórsson in Kallaðarnes. He came to meet them and swore his allegiance to Kolbein even though at first he was reluctant. But when they heard that all the men in the West Fjords had either to swear allegiance to Kolbein or suffer indignities, things turned out for them as for others when there was no way out—Ásgrím saw no other course but to do as was ordered. They rode west after that to Ísafjörð and summoned a meeting of the bóndis; they raised the question of the oath. Matters went smoothly, as was to be expected, for many of the more prominent bóndis were friends of Kolbein; furthermore, everyone wanted to do what Einar and Þórdís wished. So all the bóndis took the oath to Kolbein. After that they went to Barðaströnd and held a meeting with the chieftains there; they summoned Gísli of Rauðasand and presented Kolbein's message—Gísli was to take the oath or else expect as much greater enmity from Kolbein as he had himself aroused by taking part in more hostility to Kolbein than other men. Gísli said that he would never swear an oath of allegiance to Kolbein. The men then went away, amid threats and hostility on both sides. The priest Eyvind Þórarinsson was among them; he was a good and a well-intentioned man, one who had often mediated between Gísli and other men whenever necessary. Þórarin Kollason, Eyvind's nephew, was also with them. They summoned Gísli to talk with them and asked him to consider how dangerous the situation had become; they said that he had neither Sighvat nor Sturla to help him now nor any of the others who had strongly supported him earlier. Gísli retorted that Kolbein and those men who had plotted Sighvat's and Sturla's deaths deserved something other than his offer of allegiance. Eyvind said that Gísli should try to find some way of managing things so that he himself would not suffer and the district not be roused to strife which would then be blamed on Gísli. Gísli said he would never swear an

oath of allegiance to Kolbein Arnórsson, no matter what the cost.

Eyvind was silent for a time and then said, "Swear the oath to Kolbein ungi. I have a son named Kolbein who is named for Kolbein Sighvatsson, and your oath may seem to you just if you keep in mind the idea of swearing to this Kolbein."

Gísli said that by their advice he would do this, and with that decision they went to meet Einar and the men from the north. Eyvind announced that Gísli would yield to his entreaties and those of their other friends. Einar Jónsson dictated the oath to Gísli who swore it as Eyvind and Þórarin had suggested, and no one saw through this. Then all the bóndis swore their oaths at that meeting as they had been ordered to do, and they parted no better friends than when they had come together. Einar and his companions went northward along the fjord and all but a few of the more prominent bóndis took the oath too. Sanda-Bárð and some other men refused to swear it. Kolbein's men rode north after that, and thus Kolbein had gained control of the West Fjords by such means as have here been described.

That same autumn Þorfinn fip was driven ashore in Hrútafjörð. Dufgus' sons and many other Icelanders were on the ship and they rode to the homestead at Hjarðarholt. Björn drumb then went with Þorstein Hjálmsson north to meet Kolbein. They rode to make peace for the two brothers with Kolbein, but when they reached the ridge near Svínavatn a man rode out to meet them; his name was Jón liðsmað. Þorstein asked him the news; he told them about the ship's coming into Gásar and said Þórð Sighvatsson and many other Icelanders had been aboard. Þorstein then asked where Jón was headed.

"My plan is to get to the West Fjords, to meet with you and other prominent bóndis."

Þorstein asked him his business.

Jón said, "Kolbein has sent out word that if Þórð showed up anywhere around here he was to be seized and brought to Kolbein."

Þorstein then bade Jón seek out the other bóndis, "While we," he said, "ride off to meet Kolbein."

They parted and Jón rode west while Þorstein and his men

rode north with Björn. But when Jón was out of sight Björn said to Þorstein, "I have now heard of such plans as make me want to turn back and not go a step further."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Þorstein.

Björn replied, "I know that my brother will go to Þórð as soon as they seize him, and though I have sworn my oath to Kolbein I mean to follow Þórð and his men."

Þorstein felt uneasy about this but said Björn must decide for himself. This was about the time of the morning meal.[3] Björn turned back and rode south so that he met no one until he reached home at Hjarðarholt shortly after nightfall. He woke up his brothers and told them the news. They were pleased and thought that he had managed things well, and all remained at their homestead for a time.

2

When Þórð came ashore in Eyjafjörð some of Kolbein ungi's homemen were there; they hurried at once to Skagafjörð to see Kolbein and told him that Þórð had returned to Iceland. Þórð landed on the last Saturday before the Latter Feast of the Virgin Mary—this fell on the second day of the week.[4] Many of the more prominent bóndis were there in the marketplace, men who had been close friends of his father; his mother Halldóra[5] and other relatives also came to meet him. At first everyone was happy for him, but when they thought about Kolbein ungi's power, and how great it had grown, it seemed to them that Þórð was as good as dead. And those sorrows which had abated for Halldóra were newly awakened; none of Þórð's kinsmen dared help him for everyone was so terrified that no one risked telling him anything not already public knowledge. Furthermore, many had been involved in disputes with Þórð, men who had taken over the lands which his father and brothers had owned. When Þórð saw that on account of Kolbein's power people were frightened into hostility, and that everyone thought he would risk his own life or property if he did Þórð a good turn, he mounted his horse and rode away inland to his own district.

At Grund, on his paternal land, Styrmir Þórisson was then living

with Sigríð Sighvat's daughter. They had two children, a son named Teit and a daughter Halla. Teit was not then at home but had gone out to Grímsey. When Sighvat and Sturla had died Kolbein had summoned a Court of Execution[6] against Sighvat and declared him bankrupt. He embroiled all the prominent men of Eyjafjörð in this case one way or another: either he forced them to demand the property and claim ownership, or he forced them to purchase it whether they wanted it or not, and take full possession of it, until the whole community was ever more strongly bound to oppose Þórð if he returned to Iceland. Furthermore, Kolbein pretended he had bought part of the estate at Grund from Halldóra and Tumi and given them in exchange property in Skagafjörð, where Halldóra and her son were then living, at Þverá. Kolbein thought that Tumi would find it less easy to rouse opposition if he was surrounded by enemies. But he drove Styrmir and Sigríð Sighvat's daughter north to Eyjafjörð, although they had lived up to now in Bjarnarstaðahlíð, for he feared that they might remain there as spies; then he claimed that Sigríð had said, as was proper, that she had taken over her father's position. Sigríð said that Kolbein might drive her away from her rightful homestead, "But I will never consider that I own Grundarland, even though I settle down there."

But that case, like others, turned out the way Kolbein wished.

When Þórð reached Grund, Abbot Árni and Guðmund Gíslsson came to him and bade him go off again as fast as he could; they said the moment Kolbein knew of his return he would at once send men in pursuit of him. Most of the people present explained to Þórð that his cousin Hálfdan (son of Sæmund Jónsson in Oddi) was the most likely person to give him some assistance, because of his opportunities and his kinsmen, and they declared that his sister Steinvör was an exceptionally fearless woman and very likely to urge on her husband Hálfdan. Þórð took their advice and rode south. At that time he had not more than two companions from Eyjafjörð—Snorri Þórálfsson, who had returned to Iceland with him, and another man named Hámund Þorsteinsson, called auga, who was their guide. They rode north across Vaðlaheið and so up along the northern route to Sand.

When Kolbein ungi learned of Þórð's return, he at once sent thirty of his homemen north to Eyjafjörð. When they reached Gásar they searched all the booths, sword in hand, but as was to be expected did not find Þórð. They were ill content with their expedition by then and seized Leif, a Norwegian, who was later known as Knarrar-Leif. They said they intended to cut off his feet—Leif had been a friend and companion of Þórð—and they seized all the weapons which the merchants owned. All the merchants interfered then, saying that Leif was blameless; so they freed Leif but robbed two Icelanders, Styrkár Einarsson and Þorbjörn skakk, of thirty hundreds' worth of goods. After that they traveled west and told Kolbein that Þórð had ridden off to Sand.

Kolbein immediately sent word to Hjalti the bishop's son to guard himself and to choose for his watchmen those he expected would be most useful to him. Hjalti was at home and somewhat increased the number of his men there. Þórð rode on his way until he reached Keldur, where Hálfdan and Steinvör gave him a warm welcome. When Þórð had been at Keldur a few days he asked his cousin Hálfdan and his sister Steinvör to have a talk with him; he said they knew of the great loss he had suffered in the death of his father and his brothers, "and all our possessions seized, and no place of safety allowed to me. I have come to you now, cousin, to ask some help from you, and to find out, if God grants us the chance, whether we can by any means recover our honor. No man seems to me more likely to be of help to me than you, first on account of our kinship and then because with your wealth and other powers you have greater influence than any of my other supporters. You are the two of whom I expect most in this affair."

Steinvör replied firmly to Þórð's speech, saying that obviously Hálfdan would gather a force and would give Þórð all the help he could; she said that up to now he had been no fighting man, and added, "I have seldom urged him to concern himself in dangerous matters; but now I want to make it plain that our happiness with each other will not continue, Hálfdan, if you do not help my brother Þórð. Otherwise, it might be that though it

is against my nature I would take up weapons myself and see if men would follow me, and then I would hand over to you the key to the pantry."

Steinvör continued to speak vehemently for a time, but Hálfdan remained silent and listened; when Steinvör fell silent Hálfdan said: "It looks to me as if this affair will require more than vehemence alone, if this venture Þórð is undertaking is to be carried through. I know best what sort of man I myself am: I am little use in a dangerous business, I am somewhat stricken in years, and I have always been reluctant to get involved in major quarrels. Furthermore, it looks to me as if those who are concerned in this case will have almost the entire populace against them. Also, I would like to know what force Þórð can gather in other places where he has kinsmen and friends. If Þórð can muster some force to bring here then I will join him."

Steinvör urged this strongly and they all decided together that Þórð should go to the West Fjords and try to find out what men there would give him any support. Hálfdan said there were many men there who had losses to redress at Kolbein's hand as well as at the hands of southern men, and he added that they were probably more eager for a fight than either he or his men were.

3

At that time Tumi Sighvatsson had a home at Arnarbæli. He went at once to Keldur when he learned that Þórð had arrived and there was a very happy meeting between the brothers. Tumi and some men with him joined Þórð's group to ride west. Nikulás Oddsson was the name of one man; his father Odd was from a family in the East Fjords; Nikulás' mother was Herdís the daughter of Börk of Baugsstaðir who was a member of Hálfdan's following. Nikulás was a big man, strong and very intelligent. Steinvör and Hálfdan persuaded him to join Þórð's following. Börk Guðmundsson was the name of another man who likewise joined Þórð's party. The brothers Tumi and Þórð got together nearly twenty men there before they rode away from Keldur. They then rode west across Þjórsá; they rode through the district in such

a way that Hjalti the bishop's son knew nothing of their journey and they pressed on west to Borgarfjörð and so into the Dales.

There was a man named Sverting, Þorleif's son, who was then living at Hvamm. Tumi went there to stay, while Þórð went on to the West Fjords. When Órækja had been driven abroad those who had been in his following had dispersed widely throughout his district; when they heard that Þórð had come into the Dales they thought him the most likely leader for them in any uprising against their enemies. Almost all of them flocked to him and he gave most of them a cordial reception. His kinsmen, the sons of Dufgus, were foremost in that company—Björn kægil and Kolbein grön. There also were Þorgeir Hróðbjartsson who was called stafsendi, a cousin of Dufgus' sons, Guðmund Jónsson who was called sorti and was a son of Þórdís, the daughter of Svein Sturluson; Ásgrím baulufót and many others were also there among them, though we will not name them all here. Þórð then rode on west to Saurbær.

Sturla Þórðarson was then living at Staðarhól, and Þórð received a warm welcome there. After he had spent the night there, Þórð and Sturla went aside to talk; Þórð declared that he had been told that Sturla was the most outstanding and the ablest man among his kinsmen in that district:

"And I have also learned that you have suffered almost as great loss as we did at Örlygsstaðir. Ever since, you have helped those of my kinsmen who have tried to recover their losses, and I hope you will help me also. I was further told that you were not so pleased with the way matters stood at your parting from Órækja that you would be averse to helping any men who wish to take revenge."

Sturla said he was in difficult position: "For you will have heard that I have given my word to Kolbein ungi, and that all the best men in my district are likewise bound by their oaths."

Þórð declared that all those oaths had been extorted by necessity. Sturla said that he would support Þórð as far as he could and that he would have ready such forces as he could provide when Þórð returned from the West Fjords. Þórð then went north across Breiðafjörð to Barðaströnd. The priest Eyvind Ragnheiðar-

son was then living at Hagi, as was said earlier. He was married to Þórun Gellir's daughter; her mother was Vigdís Sturla's daughter.

Gísli Markússon was then living at Bær in Rauðasand. He was married to Þórdís Gellir's daughter, Þórun's sister, and was thus related to Þórð. He was the most powerful chieftain west of Arnarfjörð and was by then well on in years. He had been on fighting expeditions all his life, first with Sighvat and then with Sturla when he came to the Dales. No man had been a more sincere supporter of the Sturlungs in all quarrels than he had; in addition, he placed full trust in them and often needed to call on them because he was a very overbearing man. Gísli's legitimate sons were barely grown up then but he had many illegitimate sons who were fully grown. When Þórð reached Hagi, he sent for Gísli and summoned to him all the bóndis who had any legal skill. Þórð then presented his case first to Gísli and then to all the people; he asked Gísli to go south with him to meet with Hálfdan and asked any other men who were willing to join the troop. He enumerated his difficulties, which were extensive, and said furthermore that he and all the people in these districts had suffered similar losses, so that it was most fitting he should become the leader in this case and they should be his followers.

"In a short time one of two things will happen," he said; "either we will win justice for ourselves or else fall beside our kinsmen. Whichever happens to us we will have done the right thing."

Gísli said that he was now too old to fight and it was time for him to stay at home, but still, he declared, necessity demanded that all the others collect a force and go to Þórð's assistance.

"I have given my word to Kolbein in such a way that I can very well still oppose him. I will give you, Þórð, four sons for your expedition and I will urge as many other men to support you as I can talk to—this I think will be of great help to you."

Þórð accepted this rather coolly and said that he had never expected Gísli himself to hold back. Þórð then went north to Eyr in Arnarfjörð. Steinun, Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson's daughter and

grand-daughter of Bárð svarti, was then living at Eyr. Her mother was Hallkatla, the daughter of Einar, who was the son of Grím Ingjaldsson, who was the son of Ingjald, the son of Grím glammað, the son of Þorgils errubeinsstjúp. Steinun had six children—two daughters and four sons. Hrafn was the name of her oldest son; the second, Guðlaug; third, Óláf; and fourth, Odd. Herdís was the name of her elder daughter; she was married to a man we mentioned before, Svarthöfði Dufgusson, a kinsman of Þórð. Svarthöfði was then living at Eyr with Steinun. Steinun's other daughter was named Halla.

4

When Þórð came to Eyr it was reported that Hrafn and Svarthöfði were not at home: they had gone north to Dýrafjörð to a wedding in Hjarðardal. It was then the evening before the Feast of St. Mikjál. Þórð sent a man north at once that night to Hjarðardal, to tell Hrafn and Svarthöfði they were to come to meet him at Sand. Bárð Þorkelsson, known as Sanda-Bárð, was then living at Sand. He was married to Cecilía, the daughter of Guðmund Sigrídarson. When Þórð's message reached them they went to meet him at Sand where Þórð called Hrafn and Svarthöfði and Bárð in to confer and told them just what his plan was; he declared that he placed his first and best hopes in his kinsman Svarthöfði.

And Svarthöfði said he thought, "When your brother Sturla was slain before us, and we were all mistreated and disgraced, we felt we would be happy if only someone would take vengeance. You will not need to beg us for whatever help we can give."

Bárð said that he would decide just like the men of Eyr: "For that has long been a good choice for me." Bárð was a tenant of Hrafn. Þórð asked, "Who is that young man? Why don't you say anything?"

He said his name was Hrafn and he was Odd's son. Þórð said he had heard men speak of him.

"Will you not join our expedition?"

Hrafn said he was young and little suited for fighting expeditions.

"I have not," he said, "been on an expedition with any chieftains up to now."

He added that he did not know whether he would be strong enough since he had so shortly left childhood behind. Hrafn was sixteen years old when Þórð came to the West Fjords at that time.

Þórð then told Hrafn he had greater reason than other men to oppose Kolbein, because of the murder of his mother's brothers: "Nor was any of the men who were lost more famous than Sveinbjörn or Krák, except for my father Sighvat."

Hrafn then said that both things would not be true, that: "I am both little able to help you and also reluctant to give you what little help I can."

Þórð thanked him warmly and said that he thought Hrafn would be of great help because of the might of his kinsmen.

These were the outstanding bóndis in the North Fjords when Þórð went there: Jón Þorkelsson lived at Álftamýr. He was married to Guðrún the daughter of Tómas of Selárdal and of Halla Þórð Sturluson's daughter. Guttorm, the son of Helgi Sveinsson, lived at Lokinhamrar; his mother was Þuríð, the daughter of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson; Guttorm had lost his father and two uncles at the battle of Örlygsstaðir. Bjarni Brandsson, a good bóndi, was living then at Mýrar; the priest Steindór Steindórsson lived at Holt in Önundarfjörð. Guðmund Sigríðarson lived then at Kirkjuból in Önundarfjörð. These bóndis were settled then in Ísafjörð: Sigmund Gunnarsson lived in Súðavík; he later married Herdís Hrafn's daughter who had first been married to Eyjólf Kársson, and they had one son, named Eyjólf. Einar Þorvaldsson was then a young man and he and his mother Þórdís had a farm at Vatnsfjörð. The preceding summer Illugi Þorvaldsson had been slain and the bóndis in Ísafjörð were so furious with Órækja about the slaying of Illugi that they planned to attack him. The leader in this was Pál Bárðarson from Ögr—his mother was Valgerð Snorri's daughter and she was a maternal cousin of Illugi. But when Órækja got word of this some of those who had taken part in it, including Pál, fled north to Kolbein's

district and became his close friends, as was reported earlier.[7] Þormóð Hjálmsson lived at Þernuvík; Aron the son of Halldór Ragnheiðarson was living at Ögr; Þórð Heinreksson was living at Reykjarfjörð; and Atli Hjálmsson, at Grunnavík.

Þórð Sighvatsson went north to Hjarðardal and arrived before men had left the wedding. All the best men from west of Ísafjörð were there. Þórð talked at length about his mission. He began by demanding support from all the men there and insisting that they make ready to depart so swiftly that they would reach Saurbær by All Saints' Day. When Þórð had concluded his speech men thought that they knew how intelligent a man he must be because he could control his temper, although he seemed to them at first somewhat laborious in his speech. But the longer he talked and the larger his audience became, the freer and more eloquent he was in speaking. Those men replied first who had bound themselves by oath to Kolbein in the preceding autumn; they explained that it would not be right to attack Kolbein inasmuch as he had not committed any offense against them. And they said that it was no use trying to get them to join Þórð's opposition to Kolbein although, they added, they would be his friends in other ways. Þórð said he could resolve his difficulties by demanding that the men of the West Fjords be either with him or against him; he said he had firmly made up his own mind that, if he survived this expedition, "I will be able to forgive you according to your sins, especially those of you who now show yourselves at your worst."

The bóndis replied that many of them deserved harsh requital even though he did not threaten them with this, and Þórð replied that they did not need to remind him of his losses. Both sides began to threaten one another, but the bóndis declared that this did not frighten them, and with that they separated. Þórð went to Sand in the evening; the following day Bárð offered him his homestead and Þórð accepted. Bárð's action was held a generous one.

5

A little later Þórð sent messengers throughout the fjord to call up troops while he himself went north to Önundarfjörð and there

collected a few men; from there he went on to Ísafjörð but there he got next to no recruits. However, the Ísafirðings, friends of Kolbein, sent him news. Þórð went north from there to Steingrímsfjörð. Ásgrím Bergþórsson was living then at Kallaðarnes, as we reported earlier. The kinsmen met one another and Þórð demanded that Ásgrím join the expedition and said that for him the most honorable thing to do would be to join the troops:

"First," he argued, "because of our kinship; next, because my brother Sturla greatly helped you to get on in the world; and third, because you suffered in all the losses at Örlygsstaðir where you saw the death of your kinsmen and of those men whom you will never forget."

Ásgrím excused himself ingeniously on many counts and cited the law in his defense, for he was very clever. First he cited the oaths he had sworn to Kolbein; then he said, as was true, that he lived too near the northerners to risk any hostility toward them. Finally he so cleared himself by his arguments that he announced he would not go anywhere at all. Þórð talked with the other bóndis, but they all held back when they knew that Ásgrím meant to remain at home.

6

There was a man named Ásbjörn, son of Guðmund smið, Solomon's son. He was a lone wolf and a valiant man although not from a great family. He went up to Þórð and said, "What do you mean by calling in for this expedition only those men who are bóndis? Have you no use for any others? I will volunteer my services for your expedition and I expect to be far more help to you than any bóndi. Give me a company of men and I'll try my hand at getting some more bóndis. It will be better for you and me to deal with one another, for none of the others deserves mercy."

Þórð liked this suggestion and said they would act according to his plan. The following morning Þórð got nine men for Ásbjörn and referred to the whole group as The Guests.[8] Ásbjörn then went out along Steingrímsfjörð. Most of the bóndis had

left their homesteads and hidden themselves for they had heard rumors of the plan the previous evening. But all those who had stayed at home had to join Ásbjörn. He went on until he reached Húsavík. Högni was the name of a bóndi who lived there; he was away so Ásbjörn took his wife away with him, thinking that then the bóndi would come after him and thus be forced to join them. The homemen got the news to Högni that his wife had been taken away and Högni pursued Ásbjörn and his party with thirteen men; they met each other near a hay yard. Högni demanded that Ásbjörn release his wife; Ásbjörn replied that if Högni would join their troop his wife could go home. But the bóndis didn't want that; they said he deserved something quite different for such a trick. They began to threaten each other then and Ásbjörn egged the bóndis on to attack, but nothing came of it. Then Ásbjörn made a thrust with his spear and said this would cure them of pursuing Þórð's men another time. The spear pierced Högni's thigh and sank down into his groin—a deep wound and fatal. It was the first injury Þórð's men inflicted. Some of the men now joined the expedition but others carried Högni to his home.

Þórð rode south from Steingrímsfjörð to Saurbær. Their forces met with those who came there from farther west on the evening before All Saints' Day. Þórð and Sturla there met each other and Þórð asked whether Sturla was ready to go on with him now. Sturla said he could not bring himself in such circumstances to break his word and that of so many men who were involved in this with him.

"But it won't be long before the northerners break their word to me, and then I shan't be hindmost. However, I will ride south with you as far as Borgarfjörð if you like."

Þórð was not pleased and said he didn't know what advantage this offered, but he rode south across the heath to Hvammsfjörð and Sturla accompanied him. His brother Tumi came to meet him. Þórð's nephew, Teit Styrmisson, had arrived from the north with six men. Þórð then rode with this entire force to the Dales, where he summoned together all the most prominent men and sought their advice about what they should plan to do next.

They considered the size of their force: there were nearly two hundred men. They thought this was not sufficient strength with which to ride north and most of the men suggested that Þórð turn south. They thought that resistance would be weaker in the south, though hostile enough. Furthermore the troops were short of weapons. Many men advised that Þórð first go wherever he could find more weapons, and Þórð asked where this might be. He was told that Loft the bishop's son had many shields and a large stock of other weapons. Þórð said that Loft more than any other man deserved to suffer some outrage from him, for "He has long been opposed to our kinsmen, and has been one of the most active among men in plots against my father and brother."[9]

Everyone then spoke up for this move and they decided to ride south to Hítardal.

7

Loft the bishop's son was then living at Húsafel in Hítardal. When Þórð came up on the heath from Svínbjúgsdal he called Teit Styrmisson to him, bade him ride ahead into Hítardal and seize Loft the bishop's son, but neither do him harm nor let any men escape from the homestead. Teit rode ahead with fifteen men and they surrounded the homestead. But Loft was not there for he had ridden away earlier in the day, down below Hraun. Skúli Þorsteinsson was then living below Hraun. Warning reached Loft in the evening and he rode down to the coast, found a ship there, and so went on across the fjord to Garðar. Þorleif Þórðarson was living there then and Loft stayed with him for a time.

Þórð stayed the night in Hítardal and the following morning he had all the horses driven together and all the weapons he could find taken away; shields were brought out from the church. Þórð then went south to the southern part of Reykjardal. Þórð Bjarnarson came to meet him—he was then living at Eskiholt and was married to Margrét the daughter of Þórðis Sveinbjörn's daughter. The day Þórð left Hítardal he and Sturla met and talked with each other; afterwards Sturla turned back west, and nothing came of their talk. Þórð rode on south over the heath

through Skarðaleid to Laugardal until he reached Gizur's homestead at Tunga. His mother, Þóra Guðmund's daughter, was already there. Everything had then been removed to the church so that there was nothing in the house for men to eat except some milk custard. Therefore the men wanted to slaughter some cattle but Þórð forbade them, saying they must not waste time on this and that fighting men ought to use whatever food was available. Then he got word that Hjalti had collected a troop from south of Flói. Þórð ordered every man to saddle his horse; they did so and all rode off at once; Þórð ordered those who knew the route to Flói to ride in the lead. His brother Tumi said that was far from his intention and that,

"Everyone who wants to follow me must now ride east across the river," for help could be expected from that quarter. Þórð yielded to their persuasions and rode east to Keldur during the night. He talked with his kinsman Hálfdan and asked him for assistance, but Hálfdan was most reluctant and said that there was nothing to be gained by supporting Þórð. Þórð told him to summon men to help even though he himself stayed at home. Hálfdan said he would consult his brothers first. His wife Steinvör was very displeased with this but Þórð rode away then.

8

There was a man named Orm the son of Björn Þorvaldsson who was Gizur's son and the nephew of Gizur Þorvaldsson. At that time he lived at Breiðabólsstað in Fljótshlíð. He was head of a goðorð[10] and had played a large part in the slaying of Snorri Sturluson.[11] Þórð rode east to Breiðabólsstað and Orm fled eastward to Álftaver. Þórð stayed at the homestead in Breiðabólsstað for a time. The same night that Þórð arrived in the district Hjalti learned that he had come with his troops. Hjalti then decided to ride to the north to meet Kolbein Arnórsson; he ordered the bóndis to collect as large a force as possible at Skálaholt but asked the bishop to go to meet Þórð with offers of a settlement, and to drag out the negotiations until Kolbein might be able to get down from the north.

At Hjalti's request, Bishop Sigvarð rode east to Breiðabólsstað to meet Þórð and tried to bring about a settlement on behalf of the bóndis. Steinvör accompanied the bishop. The bishop made a strong plea but Þórð was quite adamant. On behalf of the bóndis the bishop suggested that six men from each side should arbitrate the terms of a settlement but Þórð refused this; instead he suggested that Steinvör and Hálfdan should arbitrate unconditionally. The bishop said he could neither reject nor accept this on behalf of the bóndis unless they chose it themselves, and he then returned home to Skálaholt to meet with the bóndis. He was to send a messenger as soon as possible to Þórð to let him know whether or not the bóndis would accept this settlement, and they set a time by which the messenger was to return.

Meanwhile men were negotiating between Þórð and Björn Sæmundarson to discover whether Þórð would honor the agreement with them which his brother Tumi had made with Björn, in both their names, before Björn had taken part in the battle at Örlygsstaðir. Þórð asked Björn to ride to meet him under a pass of safe-conduct so that they themselves could confer, and Björn rode to meet Þórð at Breiðabólsstað. Tumi strongly urged his brother Þórð to take into account that there were no more men than the last time whom he could summon to his aid in the case, and added, "I think the time is not far off when you will come to an agreement."

Þórð said that Björn himself would have the most to say about whether he would become friend or enemy:

"And I will not commit myself to come to terms with Björn until I know which he means to be."

Björn said he would show him straightway which he meant to be and gave Þórð noble gifts; Þórð accepted these and they parted amicably.

Two days later than the time arranged the man the bishop had sent to Þórð arrived and reported that the bóndis rejected the peace terms Þórð had offered. Þórð then rode at once to Keldur with his troops. Hálfdan had ridden down to Oddi but Steinvör was at home. Þórð immediately sent Dufgus' sons Kolbein and Björn to meet Hálfdan while Steinvör summoned all

their bóndis together in one place and bade them be prepared to follow Þórð and Hálfdan. Kolbein and his party met Hálfdan and gave him the message from Þórð and Steinvör. Hálfdan said he thought it unwise to attack a holy see in pursuit of some bóndis who showed no prospect of being helpful:

"Neither I nor any of my men will set out on such an expedition; at his leisure, Þórð can get satisfaction from the bóndis by some other means."

Hálfdan sent a message to his bóndis then to tell them to return to their homes. When Kolbein returned and told Þórð what Hálfdan had said, Þórð was furious and said that they were to attack the bóndis and see what came of it. He had, furthermore, reliable news about their forces, that there were almost six hundred men and that they had stationed themselves in the churchyard at Skálaholt. Þórð rode out across the river and mustered his troops, about two hundred men. Many men said, as was true, that it was unwise to make the attack. But Þórð retorted that there must often be some risk in a doubtful affair, if anything was to be gained from the undertaking.

The bishop came south from Auðsholt to meet Þórð and made the very same offer on behalf of the bóndis as before. By then Þórð was very angry with the bishop and said he was doing everything he could to weaken Þórð's position. The bishop replied that he would excommunicate Þórð and all his men if he attacked the see. Þórð asked him to let the bóndis go away from the see, saying it was wrong for him to have lured into the churchyard such brigands as those men who had destroyed the place at Miklabær one Saturday evening, and who had led out six men and had them killed one after the other. The bishop now wanted to ride ahead to warn the bóndis in the churchyard, but when Þórð's men realized this they made him wait until Þórð, who was behind, had come up with him. Þórð let the bishop ride on just as he wished but followed him at a furious pace until he came to a narrow glen near Skálaholt, where he bade his men dismount and prepare to attack. He sent Hrafn Oddsson and Teit Styrmisson up to the homestead to find out whether the bóndis were of the same mind as before about a settlement, and

to see how their equipment looked and how difficult it might be to overcome them. When they reached the house the bishop was there in his robes with thirty clerics; he said he intended to excommunicate Þórð and all his men the moment he launched an attack.

Teit was a Lawspeaker,[12] a wise and a benevolent man, Gizur's brother, and he asked the bishop to try to mediate between them and find out if there was any basis for an agreement; he said, as was true, that Þórð was greatly to be excused however much harm he had done to men, for "He has lost all his property and has nothing now for the maintenance of his men other than what he can win from his enemies or from robbing innocent men, so that he pursues his ends by whatever means he thinks likely to be most successful."

The bóndis yielded then, asked the bishop and Teit to negotiate between them, and handed the case over to their control and foresight. The bishop and Teit Þorvaldsson now went to Þórð. Hrafn and Teit Styrmisson told Þórð that the bóndis might be difficult to overcome if they put up any fight. Tumi was eager for a reconciliation. They agreed therefore on a settlement, on condition that the bishop and Steinvör should arbitrate. And whatever they could not agree on, Steinvör alone was to decide. The bóndis were to offer Þórð no hostility until Gizur returned to Iceland; this settlement between Þórð and the bóndis was to come to an end when Gizur returned, but was to be maintained until that time. Then the bóndis shook hands with Þórð on this agreement.

After the reconciliation Þórð rode east to Breiðabólsstað and again settled into Orm's homestead. Orm was in Álftaver while Þórð stayed at Breiðabólsstað; men negotiated between them then but nothing was effected toward a reconciliation. Þórð sent Björn Dufgusson west to Breiðafjarðardal and Þórð Bjarnarson to Borgarfjörð to find out about Kolbein Arnórsson's movements, for men now reported that forces were gathering in the north.

Þórð rode out across the river to Biskupstunga. The bishop and Steinvör came to meet them and pronounced their decisions;

they stipulated a fine of three hundreds for the common bóndis in Gizur's district who were liable for the Þing-faring tax[13] but five hundreds for the more prominent bóndis. After this Þórð rode up from the south to Borgarfjörð.

9

It is now time to report what we touched on earlier, that Hjalti the bishop's son came to meet Kolbein, told him how things stood with Þórð's expedition and asked him to ride to the south. Kolbein was quick to act: he sent men north at once to Eyjafjörð where they collected forces around the whole district north of Öxnadalsheið; he sent west to Hrútafjörð other men who were to call up men in the western district and assemble as many as they could. When the companies assembled, Hjalti wanted the whole force sent south over Kjöl and so forward against Þórð, but Kolbein said that they might find Þórð would already have ridden west,

"Before we come south; and thus we might fail to catch him. I mean to lead a group west across the heath and so to Borgarfjörð; this way we will at least meet Þórð, whether he moves south or west."

Hjalti said the men of the south had now suffered strife long enough, but Kolbein said they could quite well have thrown off their enemies if they had had the determination and the courage to do so, and then they would not have needed the help of other men. The northerners all hoped Hjalti would not prevail and said that this was all his doing anyway. So Kolbein rode with his whole company west to Miðfjörð and from there south to Tvídægra. When they came up from Gnúpsdal Kolbein took count of his forces and there were a good six hundred men. Kolbein said he had enough men then if good luck would attend them. The weather was such that in the morning when they rode up over the heath they met a sleet storm with a light wind, and the men were wet through. But as the day wore on it began to freeze and the wind veered to the north. There followed a stretch of such darkness and frost that men have seldom seen its like.

It was not long before they could not see where they were going and the troops were exhausted by the cold. Kolbein bade his men dismount. "And wrestle vigorously to see if this will warm you up."

They were so violent at this that many men lost their weapons because they could not hold on to them for the cold. Some men died at that time and others were permanently affected. The weather then began to brighten and they recognized that they had reached the lake which is called Hólmvatn. Each man then remounted and they went on until they reached Gilsbakki a little before daylight. Kolbein stayed the night there but the following day rode down to Reykjaholt with his whole company, while that part of the force which was not fit to travel lay behind at Síða.

10

When Þórð came down into Reykjardal at England, Þórð Bjarnarson came to meet him there and told him that Kolbein had come down from the north with a large force and was then stationed at Reykjaholt.

Ari was the name of a man who was living at Lund in southern Reykjardal. Böðvar Þórðarson lived then at Bær; he was married to Kolbein's sister, Herdís Arnór's daughter. Böðvar was a cousin of Þórð's father. Þórð rode down through Reykjardal to Lund and stayed there until the whole company had arrived. When the men were assembled there he asked the more distinguished of them for their advice as to what should be done. Almost everyone voiced an opinion: the most reckless urged that they ride to Reykjaholt, claiming that many of the men there would not defend themselves well on account of the cold. But all the wiser heads argued that it would be senseless for so few men to ride against so large a company; they said that it would be best if Þórð were to ride west without rousing any opposition. This counsel was then adopted.

Þórð rode down through the valley and intended to cross the Hvítá at Gufuskálar and thus go west to Langavatnsdal. But when he came down into Vellir it was reported that there was

no ice safe to ride on across the river; the whole group then turned up toward Grafarvað. As the men were moving up from Þingnes, Þórð rode out along a watercourse. The ice gave way beneath his horse so that both he and his horse went under water. When he came out on firm land again he was wet through, so he turned back down to Þingnes with six others.

There was a man living at Þingnes named Börk Ormsson. He received Þórð warmly and gave him a change of clothing. Þórð's men left some of their horses behind with him. Börk put them in a building near his own horses and rode with Þórð up to Grafarvað. When he turned back home again he could hear both Þórð's and Kolbein's forces. Þórð rode on to Stafaholt, rested there and then went on out across Norðrá. He posted six men behind at Svignaskarð as outposts. They were three sons of Dufgus, Sanda-Bárð, Þorstein Þorbergsson koll, and Þorgeir stafsendi. But he posted Þorð Bjarnarson behind at Eskiholt in case Kolbein should ride by the lower route. Þórð rode out then to Mýrar with his whole force and their road was very difficult. When Ari at Lund learned of Þórð's course he caught his horse and rode to Bær as fast as he could. When he reached Bær Böðvar was in bed; Ari told him that Þórð's company had ridden down through Reykjardal and told him to look after his horses so that they would not be taken. Kolbein's man Þorvald kepp, with two others, had arrived earlier and when they heard what Ari said they sprang up and rode off as fast as possible to Reykjaholt where they reported to Kolbein what had happened. He ordered each man to dress with speed and ride back as fast as he could; as soon as they were all ready they rode down through Reykjardal and into Bær. Böðvar was outside and they asked him about Þórð's journey; he said he thought he must long since have ridden to the west. Kolbein and his men then rode down to Vellir where they learned that Þórð had headed up toward Grafarvað. They turned back up to Þingnes; Börk was outside and they questioned him about Þórð's journey. He said he didn't know whether they were Þórð's men or some others but that one group of men after another had ridden past "all night long."

Kolbein ordered him to follow them, but when Kolbein himself

had ridden off some of his men lingered behind and in one building discovered the horses which were wet through and had only recently been unsaddled. They rode after Kolbein, told him they had found the horses and that they must belong to some of Þórð's men. Kolbein then rode back to Börk's farmstead.

Einar Jónsson langadjákn rode up to Börk, thrust the wooden tip of his spear between his shoulders and ordered that devil to tell whatever he knew. Börk said he didn't know what the devil might tell him but, "*I'm* not going to tell you anything more."

Börk swung the axe he had in his hand and hurled it at Einar, but Einar got out of reach of the blow which struck a horse in the leg. At this Hall Jónsson came up and said no one was to injure Börk in any way. Next to Brand Kolbeinsson, Hall was the noblest of the men from the north. The farmstead at Þingnes was now completely ransacked, all the movable goods which were indoors were taken and all the horses seized; they made a lengthy visit. Kolbein and his men rode away but Börk said he thought it would not be long before they themselves would be very unhappy about their visit, more so than he was over his loss of property.

Kolbein now rode to Stafaholt where they got reliable information about Þórð's journey and therefore rode back as fast as they could. Þórð's two spies saw Kolbein and his men as they came into Stafaholt; they mounted and rode back at once to Þórð. Kolbein and his men then had a broad path on which to ride; the two groups hurtled together and both Þórð Bjarnarson's and Kægil-Björn's horses foundered beneath them. The men then alternated running behind or riding double with Svarthöfði or Bárð, and as they were coming to Langá and were hidden by a range of hills, Svarthöfði leapt from his horse and bade his brother mount:

"I see," he said, "that it won't do for us to ride together any farther; Þórð Bjarnarson and I will get away as best we can."

Björn said he would never ride off and leave him, but Þórð and Svarthöfði raced off down to the river, while Björn and the others rode as fast as they could toward Þórð's troops. Svarthöfði and Þórð threw themselves down in the drifts and covered

themselves with loose snow. Kolbein and his men advanced so swiftly that there was almost no distance between the two parties. As Bárð and his companions drew near, Hrafn Oddason was in the rear; they ordered him to catch up with Þórð and tell him what had happened as soon as he had rested his horse. When he met Þórð the latter went right on, leading his horse behind him. Hrafn told him to mount, saying that Kolbein was right on their heels and that Svarthöfði and Þórð Bjarnarson had probably been captured. With that Þórð mounted his horse and rode down along the paths through the woods until a cliff was in sight. When they were hidden by the ridge of hills Þórð bade all his men dismount and said they were to trap and attack the enemy from there. But then as so often in other instances a fleeing host proved hard to hold. When Þórð saw that those men rode most swiftly who had earlier said their horses were so exhausted that they could not move a foot, and that he could not manage to launch an attack there, he ordered the men not to ride on so furiously and then sent Guðmund sorti ahead with orders that no one should leave the homestead once they reached Álftártunga.

When Þórð reached the homestead everyone dismounted. The skáld Ingjald Geirmundarson then told him that it was now clear how things would turn out:

"All the commoner sort flee from you now but nobler men will not desert you. If you wait for Kolbein here it will shame you and those men who are on your side."

So they remounted and went on, the route now improving so much that they were able to ride at full speed. Þórð bade the men take refuge in the church if their horses were worn out and almost thirty men ran into the church. There was a bridge at Álftá which it took a long time to cross; but after Þórð had crossed the river each man rushed forward on his own. So Þórð sent word along the lines ordering men to hold together no matter what happened, but they did not manage to do so. By then no more men were riding in Þórð's company than his own group, which was about sixty men.

Immediately after Þórð had left Álftártunga Kolbein's force

had arrived. They were so close on the heels of Þórð's men that those who had turned north from the church around in front of the house could not, when they turned back again, reach the church. Two men were killed in the churchyard then, Sigmund Hallsson and Torfi Þorgeirsson. Kolbein's men then rode up to the church doors and searched for any who were inside. Kolbein came up at that moment and said this was not prudent, for while they stood there unable to do anything useful they were letting Þórð and all the men of any importance get away. He stationed there those who could not keep up with the other men, but he and his followers rode off in pursuit of Þórð as fast as they could. When they reached Álftá they found it difficult to cross because Þórð had had the bridge destroyed. This meant a long delay for Kolbein and the rest of his troops. Þórð had now turned and was riding out through Mýrar; when he had crossed the Hítará Teit Styrmisson, Kolbein grön, and many other men dismounted to water their horses where the water lay on the surface of the ice; at that moment some of Kolbein's men rode up to the river from the south. When Teit and his companions hurried up from the river Þórð wheeled around but Kolbein's men retreated, for only a few of them had as yet arrived. Teit then ordered the men to mount hastily and said the stop had been only a rest; they all rode off then as fast as possible. But nearly that whole day Þórð rode at the end of the line and would never ride as fast as most of the other men wished. Some men talked with him, but others spurred their horses ahead of him and so began to slip away again. Kolbein's men caught a fair number of Þórð's men when their horses gave out; all of them were stripped and some of them were wounded. When Þórð rode out across the tidal flats Kolbein's men realized that he would escape them and they then turned back.

Þórð rode into Miklaholt and stayed there for a short time. Guðmund Óláfsson lived there then; he was a great friend of the Sturlungs. He urged Þórð to ride on at once, so Þórð then went west to Kerlingarskarð and thence west to Helgafel; there he got a ship and sailed out to Fagrey but had his horses driven along the coast. He reached Fagrey on Saturday before noon on

the day before the Feast of St. Andréas.[14] It seemed to everyone very remarkable and indeed almost unheard-of that men should have ridden the same horses in one journey all the way from Þingvellir to Helgafel over such bad roads as those were. Þórð had ridden from Þingvellir on Thursday about noontime and reached Helgafel Friday evening when the Star was in the east.[15] At once men thought they knew that Þórð must have been saved for some great destiny.

Kolbein rode to Álftártunga with his whole troop and stayed the night there. The following morning the men were brought out of the church. A man named Þórhall, who was Oddleif's son, had his hand cut off; a second man, named Nadd, also had his hand cut off; he had ridden down from the north with Teit Styrmisson. All the rest of the men were granted quarter for life and limb but were stripped of their weapons and horses. After that Kolbein rode to Hítardal where he was given reliable news about Þórð's expedition.

11

It is now time to tell about Svarthöfði and Þórð Bjarnarson where they lay in the snowdrift until Kolbein's troops had ridden on past. They stood up then, went to the farmstead and got horses for themselves. They rode to Stafaholt and knocked on the church door. Dufgus karl went to the door, greeted his son warmly and asked whether he knew that Óláf chaim was there with thirty men. Svarthöfði and Þórð at once leapt on their horses and rode straight off.

Svarthöfði asked Þórð: "Where do you know of a farmstead which is not on the main route?"

Þórð replied, "There is a farmstead called Skógar, and we might ride up to it."

When they reached it they went into the bathhouse and undressed. When they had rested for a little while they were told that Kolbein's men were just riding into the farmstead. Svarthöfði and Þórð again leapt up, put on their byrnies and steel hats hastily and ran outside. They went separate ways: Þórð ran into

the woods while Svarthöfði ran to the horses. He rode off as fast as possible but the others pursued him and cornered him out on a projecting crag. He pushed his horse over the edge and himself leapt quickly after him; it was a high crag, but neither he nor his horse was injured because much loose snow had piled up beneath the crag. But no one else wanted to pursue him further, and Kolbein's men rode back on their way. Svarthöfði went home to the farmstead to get his weapons and rode from there to Sauðafel. After that he went out to Fagrey to join Þórð. Þórð Bjarnarson went home to Eskiholt.

Kolbein Arnórsson turned back to Hítardal and rode north over Holtavörðuheið and thus home to Flugumýr, where he continued to maintain a force throughout the winter in various places, wherever it seemed to him most useful. There was a man named Þórarin balti [16] whom Kolbein had stationed as a spy in Miðfjörð. He had collected many rascals around him and kept an establishment at Ás. He became very unpopular and robbed everyone he could set hands on.

12

Þórð Sighvatsson stayed in Fagrey until nearly Christmas and then went inland to Ballará. Bárð Þorkelsson was living there then; he was married to Valgerð, Sighvat's daughter and Þórð's sister. Þórð received a warm reception from them and they entreated him to take over the management of everything that belonged to him there. Þórð left behind some of his men but he himself went to Búðardal and spent Christmas there. Þorbjörn Ingimundarson was living there then. At the end of the Christmas season Sturla Þórðarson went to meet Þórð and they rode together out on Dögurðarnes where Böðvar Þórðarson came to meet with them. Þórð asked Böðvar for support but Böðvar said, as was true, that he was strongly bound to both Þórð and Kolbein, inasmuch as he was married to Kolbein's sister Sigríð Arnór's daughter. He said he would first like to see if any agreement between Þórð and Kolbein could be reached. They decided then that Böðvar should ride north, but first they fixed the terms which Þórð would accept. Þórð then went west across Breiðafjörð to

Barðaströnd and from there west to Sand;[17] relations between him and Gísli of Sand were not very amicable at that time.

Þórð went from there to Selárdal. At that time an able and worthy man, the priest Tómas Þórarinsson, was living there. He was married to Halla the daughter of Þórð Sturluson. These were their children: Þórarin was the name of their eldest son; the second, Krák; the third, Auðun; and the youngest was named Snört. They were all promising men. Tómas' daughters were Guðrún, Ragnheið, Guðfina, Guðrið, and Hallbera. Þórð went from there to Sandar, where he spent the winter, and nothing of note happened.

At the beginning of Lent a message from Böðvar Þórðarson reached Þórð saying that Þórð should come to meet Böðvar at Helgafel. Þórð set out at once for Ísafjörð; from there he sent Ásbjörn Guðmundarson to see Atli Hjálmsson and ask Atli to come to meet him and become his follower. Failing which, he bade Ásbjörn see to it that Þórð suffered no injury from Atli. When Ásbjörn reached Grunnavík he gave his message to Atli; but Atli announced that he meant to keep free of Þórð's and Kolbein's quarrels, adding that he owed Kolbein good service. Ásbjörn said he would not be able to sit quiet in these quarrels and not have Þórð to reckon with if he showed himself Kolbein's friend. But he got nothing from Atli and when Þórð and Ásbjörn met one another again men felt that Þórð considered Ásbjörn's embassy had been worthless.

Þórð now went south to Saurbær and from there to Dögurðarnes and across the fjord to Helgafel. Böðvar had already arrived and it seemed to Þórð that Böðvar had let himself be completely won over, and he would not enter into any agreement offered by Kolbein. Þórð said that his case would turn out as fate willed, but never, he said, would he accept any settlement on behalf of his kinsmen which honest men did not think honorable. Þórð now went to the West Fjords and home to Sand where he stayed until after Easter.

In the spring during Rogation Days[18] Þórð went to the Dales. He heard a great deal about Þórarin balti's growing power and his disturbances. Þórð intended to attack him then but he got

no farther than Dönustaðir for his expedition was hampered by a shortage of horses. He turned back to the West Fjords but left Kægil-Björn and Þorgeir stafsendi behind.

There was a man named Hákan Bótólfsson, a Norwegian on his father's side. He was one of Duke Skúli's attendants, had come to Iceland with Órækja Snorrason and was now a homeman of Þórð at this time. These two men he left behind in the Dales, ordering them to attack and kill Þórarin the moment he disbanded his company, which numbered ten men in all. He sent Ásbjörn Guðmundarson north to Steingrímsfjörð with nineteen men, ordering Ásbjörn to take all the larger ships from Steingrímsfjörð and Strandir and move them around west to Dýrafjörð. Þórð had then received word that Kolbein meant to move in from the north with armed ships to harry the West Fjords. When Þórð returned west he went first to Sand; he gave Svefney to Bárð—worth forty-five hundreds—and he gave Bárð in addition many other worthy gifts. At the time of Moving Days[19] Þórð went to Mýrar. Bjarni Brandsson lived there then and Þórð tried to reach an agreement with Bjarni that he would manage the homestead; Bjarni agreed to this and so he and his whole household stayed with Þórð for the winter.

13

Between the time of the Þing and Moving Days Björn and Hákon went north to Miðfjörð. Þórarin was then living at Bretalæk. They arrived there at daybreak, before men were up, and straightaway went in, brandishing their weapons. Þórarin sprang up, seized a sword as a weapon and defended himself for some time and most ably. But then he fell. The others pillaged everything that was movable. Then they got word that Kolbein had collected as large a force as possible and also large ships. He made his cousin Broddi leader of this ship army and then divided his force into two parts; he himself intended to lead the land army. It was then reported for certain that he would harry the West Fjords so that Þórð could not now count on refuge there any more than anywhere else in Iceland.

Björn and his companions went west to the Dales and sent Þorgeir stafsendi to meet with Þórð. Þorgeir met Þórð at Mýrar and told him about the slaying of Þórarin and about Kolbein's other plans as they had learned of them. That same evening Þórð rode out from home to go to Ísafjörð and collect men and ships.

14

Ásbjörn Guðmundarson went to Steingrímsfjörð, as we reported earlier. He took a ferry to Heydalsá and went from there north along Strandir all the way to Trékyllisvík. The men of Strandir assembled there and meant to defend their ships and other possessions. They would not let Ásbjörn and his company land but threw stones at them and hurled spears and anything else they could put their hands on. After a short fight, however, the men of Strandir weakened and gave in. Ásbjörn and his men then seized the ferry Trékyllir, another good ship which was called Hringaskúta, and everything else they thought they might need. Ásbjörn went from there north to Drangar where Gunnlaug Þorvaldsson smið was then living. Gunnlaug had two grown sons, Auðun and Þorvald, men of bravery and great skill. Ásbjörn thought that they were hostile to him but very close friends of Kolbein, and so had both brothers seized and their hands cut off, declaring that now they would not be running to greet Kolbein with information. Ásbjörn then went north to Horn where he had a vagabond named Þórodd and known as kuggi wounded to death, for the single reason that he would not give up his weapon to Ásbjörn and his men. Ásbjörn then seized all the ships of any sort of size and went west to Ísafjörð.

Atli Hjálmsson had gone north to Strandir after a whale belonging to Þórdís Snorri's daughter. She was living then on Æðey. Atli returned from the north somewhat before the Guests but they were not aware of one another's movements. Atli reached Æðey with his cargo and shortly afterwards Ásbjörn reached Æðey. He ordered Atli to go with him to meet Þórð but Atli said he wanted first to go home for his weapons and clothes. Ásbjörn said he would join Kolbein's forces and would count himself

among the enemies of Þórð, "Nor are you to be free to do as you please," he said, and bade his men seize Atli.

Þórdís Snorri's daughter and Bárð Hjörleifsson wanted to protect Atli but they all came to blows. Atli offered whatever he had to save his life but Ásbjörn said he was to die. Atli was then slain; the man who killed him was named Skeggi. To Þórdís this seemed worse than wicked.

Ásbjörn and his men then went to Þernuvík, but Þormóð, Atli's brother, was not at home; they were told that Þormóð was out at his mountain-shed; the homemen were not on their guard because they knew of no danger to Þormóð. Ásbjörn and his companions went up to the shed; Þormóð came outside and was seized immediately. He asked the purpose of their expedition; Ásbjörn said that he would know straightway, and told him about the slaying of his brother Atli. Þormóð asked if there was any point in his making an offer to save his life. Ásbjörn replied that that could not be managed, because his brother had been slain first and Þormóð would never thereafter be considered trustworthy. Þormóð said compensation could be arranged for anything. Ásbjörn replied that subterfuge would not help. Þormóð made his confession then, prepared himself for death and then lay down. A man named Atli Hallsson killed him. After the slaying of Þormóð, Ásbjörn and his companions went to their ships and sailed out along Ísafjörð.

That same evening Þórð Sighvatsson came to Arnardal in Skutilsfjörð. Sigmund Gunnarsson and some of the men from the neighboring fjords came to him. In the evening Þórð sent some men on horseback to keep watch out on Arnarnes. When they had been on the ness a short time they saw seven ships sailing in along Ísafjörð. They rode to the homestead as fast as possible. Men jumped into their clothes and hurried down to the coast. There was lively debate as to what ships they could be; most of the men thought they must be those with Kolbein's men. Þórð then bade men run down to the skerry and prevent their landing, but when the ships came up to the land they recognized the men. Ásbjörn and his companions now came on land and he reported everything that had happened during their journey.

Everyone believed that Þórð was displeased by these actions, and that most men thought ill of them.

A little later, in the course of the morning, Eyjólf Eyjólfsson arrived; he said that he had spotted the ships of Kolbein and his men near Hornstrandir. Þórð sent his men out then in all directions to gather support, and posted lookouts so that he would have news of Kolbein's men and their movements as they were approaching. Then he summoned all his men and ships together on Sléttanes at Selvág. Thirty ships altogether were gathered there—three with a full complement of men.

Þórð now called together the ablest men and asked their opinion as to what action they should take. At that time it was reported also that Broddi and Haf Bjarnarson had arrived below Æðey with eight ships. Þórð was strongly in favor of sailing north to face them but Teit Styrmisson and Svarthöfði were more in favor of going south to Breiðafjörð; they said the game was won if they could only get hold of Kolbein, and claimed that in going north they would find only farmers and fishermen and men of little valor; they said too, as was true, that all of Þórð's most valiant followers were in the south. It was then decided that Þórð would go south with his whole force to Breiðafjörð.

15

It is now time to take up the story where Kolbein Arnórsson had sent Broddi to the West Fjords. The winter before he had sent men south to Þóra, Guðmund's daughter and the mother of Gizur—Einar Jónsson and Höskuld Gunnarsson were the leaders of this embassy—with this message: they were to proclaim a case of raid against Þórð and fourteen other men. Einar and Höskuld rode to the Þing with this commission.

Kolbein rode north to the Þing and up to the courts where Hjalti the bishop's son came to meet him. Þórð and all fourteen men were outlawed, including Teit Styrmisson, Hrafn Oddsson, four other sons of Dufgus, Eyjólf Eyjólfsson, Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, Hákon galin, and also Þorstein Þorbergsson. In general people disapproved of this, and it seemed to everyone that the

sentence showed great severity; Þórð and his men called it the "whipped outlawry" because they had only an evening meal at Tunga and this had consisted of nothing but whipped milk.[20]

After this Kolbein Arnórsson and Hjalti the bishop's son with Orm Bjarnarson rode from the Þing west to Breiðafjarðardal; they had nearly six hundred men. Sturla Þórðarson was then at Sælingsdalstunga. Kolbein sent his men there, ordering them to kill Sturla, but Sturla got word of this and escaped by riding east to Saurbær. When Kolbein's men reached Tunga they searched the whole house with drawn swords, and even the church, and all movable goods were stolen. Kolbein then rode with his entire force west to Saurbær. Sturla found passage in Tjaldanes and sailed from there out to Krossund. The sons of Dufgus, Hákon galin, and those of Þórð's homemen who had come south, came to meet him there; Kolbein and his men then rode down toward Langey along the coast. When they met there was no lack of insults exchanged by men on both sides. Kolbein's men rode back along the coast but Sturla's men at once rowed away from the shore. Sturla and Dufgus' sons parted there and he went on south across the fjord in search of troops. Kolbein Dufgusson and Hákon galin rowed in to Ballará and so south to Bildsey, seeking news of their horses; they then heard that Kolbein's men had found some ships for themselves. Björn kægil and Jón Árnason were in Tjaldanes and rowed to Akreyjar meaning to seize the ships there, but when they came in by the landing place they saw men with weapons running along the island past Kýrauga. They realized then that the northerners had arrived and jumped ashore at once. They were of a sizable number and equal in might; their leader was Óttar, a nephew of Bishop Guðmund. Óttar and his men at once ran up onto a dome-shaped hill; Björn and his companions attacked them there and demanded that they surrender. Óttar and his men handed over their weapons, surrendered, and then rode off with Björn and rowed out to Fagrey.

When Kolbein and Hákon reached Bildsey they found men already there who had bound their horses together and were preparing to move them on shipboard. Hákon and his com-

panions at once ran up on the island; Jón Oddason, known as skeggbarn, was there with eight others. They ran up from the shore onto a dome-shaped hill and made ready to defend themselves, but Kolbein and Hákon were right behind them. The moment Kolbein and his companions reached the hill Kolbein ran up and seized Jón by the hand so that they both fell down the hill; immediately, Jón was struck down. Hákon Bótólfsson snatched his steel hat from him and struck him so mighty a blow in the head that Jón died a few days after this. Then everyone was captured and stripped of their clothes, and Kolbein and his men took them all back to Fagrey.

Nothing came of Sturla's search for troops and Kolbein and his men were ill content. He had remained quiet at Fagrey and raised no disturbance. Next they learned that some of Kolbein's force had come in to Arney with one ship. Sturla decided to send a man west to meet Þórð and tell him to move south with all possible haste while he and the Dufgussons rowed with four ships in to Arneyjarsund intending to prevent Kolbein's men from landing until Þórð should arrive from the west. The situation was that the isthmus which ran across the strait had deep water on both sides at flood tide, but could be crossed at ebb tide. When Sturla and his men reached the strait they placed their ships on both sides of the isthmus and intended to hurl stones at the others so they would not be able to ride across the strait and thus inland. When it was ebb tide Kolbein and his men pressed forward, riding along the isthmus where the strait was narrower and men could hurl stones at the seamen from both islands. Sturla and his men then retreated from the strait while Kolbein's company rode across into Langey and then pressed on at once across Krossund. After that they rode directly inland through Meðalfellsströnd and so into the Dales, but Sturla went home to Fagrey.

Sturla's messenger met Þórð in Flatey and told him of the situation in the south. Þórð ordered his men to fill all their ships with stones, then he gave solemn promises to God, made a long and eloquent speech bidding them be of good cheer if it came to a battle, and urged every man to do his best. After that the

men went to their ships and by sailing and rowing at the same time managed to move south across the bay. When the ships headed in among the islands Kolbein Arnórsson and his men saw them and thought they recognized the force as Þórð's. Þórð and his company met some fishermen in a boat and these men told them what had happened between Sturla and Kolbein's men. Þórð then headed out to Fagrey where he and Sturla met each other. They decided to send Teit Styrmisson south to Böðvar to ask for his help, but Þórð and Sturla sailed their ships in to Hólmslát where Böðvar and Teit arrived at the time agreed upon; but it turned out as before that Böðvar would not help Þórð against Kolbein. Þórð stayed for a while in the islands of Holmslát with thirty ships, and had at that time four hundred men.

It is now reported of Kolbein and his men that they rode into the district of Hvamm and so across into Laxárdal where they began to make raids, injure men, and rob properties. People then drove their livestock into the fells and so saved themselves and their animals.

There was a man named Tosti who was a follower of Hjalti the bishop's son. He rode up on to the ridge south of Laxárdal with two others to look for horses for their men. They saw where cattle and horses had been driven away from them, and that there were three men with the animals, all unarmed. A man named Ingólf was driving the livestock; he was a big, strong man and when he saw that none of his men could escape he ordered them to attack the others the moment they met face to face. When Tosti and his men came up they demanded that Ingólf and his men surrender their livestock. But Ingólf said they would not do so without a trial of strength, and at once ran at Tosti while his companions at the same time gave proof of their mettle. Both Tosti and Ingólf were strong men but it turned out in their struggle that Tosti fell. Ingólf then grabbed the hilt of the sword with which Tosti was armed and with his first blow struck off one leg where the calf was thickest, and with his second blow struck off his other foot at the instep. After that they seized all their weapons and horses while Tosti's companions fled to the homestead and told Hjalti that Tosti had been

wounded. Hjalti and his men then saw some men cutting hay in one part of the meadow land and Hjalti had them seized. One was named Áslák and the other Árni; they were old men and frail of health and had therefore not hidden themselves. Hjalti had the feet struck off each of them, and men spoke ill of this deed. Hjalti then also ordered men to break the legs of two men in Laxárdal; after that he rode home while Kolbein's men rode north to Skagafjörð.

When Þórð learned of this, he sailed west to Barðaströnd. He himself left the ship but had men sail the ships farther along the coast. Þórð learned that Broddi and Haf had headed north from Ísafjörð with some ships after they had already done some pillaging but had killed no one. Þórð and all his men then went home to his place at Mýrar and stayed at home there for a while.

Men now demanded that a reconciliation be sought and it seemed obvious that one or the other—Þórð or Kolbein—would have to give way to the other.

16

Tumi Sighvatsson had spent that winter in Skálaholt with Bishop Sigvarð as was reported earlier.[21] After the Þing, when Hjalti and his men had come south, Tumi secretly rode north with two other men and then went west to Flatey to meet Teit Styrmisson. Tumi and Teit now decided to manage that property together. When Tumi had been there a short while they made an expedition south to the Dales, twelve men altogether. Dufgus' sons, Björn and Kolbein, were with them; they went south to Borgarfjörð and thence south over Gagnheið until they reached the farmstead called Ölfusvatn. A man named Símon and known as knút was living there then; he had been a follower of Gizur Þorvaldsson from childhood and had been at the battle of Örlygsstaðir with Gizur. He was numbered among the men of most ill-will towards the Sturlungs, had been at the slaying of Snorri Sturluson at Reykjaholt and was said to have wounded him. With him also was a man named Þorstein Guðinason, one of the men of Kjös, who was also believed to have struck Snorri

a mortal wound. Tumi and his men now surrounded the farmstead, instantly ransacked it, and found Símon in the bathhouse which he had filled with steam. He was led out and slain. The man who killed him was named Gunnar Hallsson and called nautatík. They found out that Þorstein was in the mountain-shed and Björn Dufgusson rode up there with four men. They seized Þorstein, and Björn asked who would strike off his hands. Sigurð was the name of a man who was known as vegglág; he was a Norwegian and had been one of Duke Skúli's attendants. He had come out to Iceland with Snorri and had been at Reykjaholt when Snorri was slain. He asked Björn to hand him his axe and said he had determined, when they killed his master, that he would in some way harm every one of the men who were there if ever he had the opportunity. Þorstein stretched out his left hand but Björn bade him stretch out his right, saying he had struck Snorri with that hand and "therefore this is the one which must be struck off."

Sigurð struck off Þorstein's hand but did him no further injury because Þorstein was weakened by loss of blood. They laid hold of horses and movable goods; rode west across the heath and so back to the Dales; from there they went home to Flatey.

17

It was on the Feast of St. Óláf that Þórð Sighvatsson learned the news just now reported about the arrival of a ship at Dögurðarnes. Eyvind bratt, the son of Eyvind skalli, was in command of the ship. Þórð went south at once across to Breiðafjörð with his homemen and spent some nights with the ship at Dögurðarnes. Men came down there from the northern district and told him all the news they had learned, among other things that Kolbein remained at home and all was quiet. He found out too that everyone west of Skagafjörð was staying at home, each man at his own place. He then sent Nikulás and Hrafn Oddson south to the Dales to collect horses as secretly as possible while he himself pretended to be planning to go to the West Fjords. But as soon as he came south to the islands he let his homemen know

that he would turn back to the Dales and go north from there as far as he thought he could push ahead.

Snorri Þórálfsson, who had come to Iceland with Þórð and who was mentioned earlier—he came from a Norwegian family and his close relatives were Mörð sterk, Ásbjörn Illugason, and many other men of the northern district—was the first to speak; he said that he would join Þórð in this expedition if he could stipulate that quarter be given to his kinsmen. But Þórð said he would not grant quarter to anyone so long as he still had no power over anyone, and that Snorri's word would carry no weight if he himself were not present. Snorri now became very arrogant and declared that he would join only if he received such assurances beforehand. At this they separated and Snorri went to the West Fjords while Þórð made his way south to Skógarströnd and so into the Dales.

Þórð met all his men on Saturday in Höfði at Haukadalsá; in the evening they rode, fifty-four men in all, south over Brattabrekka, across Karlsháls during the night, and then up along Kjarradal, so that they reached Fljótstunga at sunrise on Sunday morning without anyone being aware of their riding into the district. On Sunday evening they rode up on to Arnarvatnsheið. That Monday was the Feast of St. Laurentíus and there was to be a great meeting at Giljá; men came from Miðfjörð, Langdælir, and Vatnsdal, and everyone from west of Skagafjörð. It was then learned that Þórð had gone back to the West Fjords from Dögurðarnes and everyone now thought he could count on a season of peace.

Þorstein Jónsson was then living in Hvamm; his son Eyjólf was nineteen years old. He was one of the most promising men of his times, big and handsome, indeed of so prepossessing an appearance and so strong that no one his age could match him. He lived sometimes at home with his father and was sometimes a follower of Kolbein at Flugumýr. At that time Mörð Eiríksson was living with his kinsman Þorstein at Hvamm; Mörð was married to Þorstein's daughter Borghild. Þorstein had married Ingun Ásgrím's daughter. Þorstein and Mörð had been with Kolbein at Örlygsstaðir where Sighvat and his sons perished, and it was

said that Mörð had wounded them. At Örlygsstaðir Mörð had had a big spear, as was usual at that time, and when men were riding back from the north down through Vatnsskarð someone observed that the spear was all bent. Another man who was riding alongside and had been Mörð's companion on the expedition retorted, "It has been bent against mighty bones."

Þórð had heard of this remark and was therefore ill disposed toward Mörð.

Helgi was the name of a man who lived at Másstaðir; he was Hámund's son, second only to Þorstein as one of the most prominent bóndis in Vatnsdal. He was married to Valgerð, the daughter of Kolbein kaldaljós. He was a well-known physician but he too had been at Örlygsstaðir against the Sturlungs. Einar was the name of a man who was Hall's son and lived at Giljá; he was a most valiant man who always took part in Kolbein's expeditions and he too had been present at Örlygsstaðir in the battle against Sighvat.

18

It is now to be reported that Þórð rode up onto Arnarvatnsheið on Sunday evening and on Monday rode all the way to the inhabited part of Vatnsdal; then at night, when it grew dark, he rode down into the valley. The farmstead at Haukagil was the first one they surrounded; there he discovered that all the bóndis in the valley were at their homes. The force was now divided into companies; Ásbjörn was at the head of one and the Guests were with him, while Teit Styrmisson and Svarthöfði Dufgusson led the other. Egil Sölmundarson and Einar Ásgrímsson were there also. There were eighteen men in each company. They discussed where each company should go; men wanted least of all to go to Hvamm, because of Þorstein's popularity. Þórð said that it was very probable that he would go where the others least wanted to, "And furthermore," he added, "I don't know any man from the north whom it would be more fitting for me to kill than Þorstein Jónsson."

Teit and Svarthöfði then went with their company to Másstaðir; the Guests were to ride to Hof, from there down west of

the river to Breiðabólsstað, lay hands on a man named Hallvarð Jósepsson and then ride down to Hólavað where all the men were to meet.

The first thing to report now is that Þórð rode to Hvamm and arrived shortly before sunrise. All the doors were locked and no one was afoot. The men split up and took positions before the entrances while Hákon galin ran to the door in front of the entrance nearest the church, broke it open and with that awakened the homemen. The priest ran up to the entrance just as Hrafn and Nikulás ran in; they bade him come out but he posted himself between the outer door and the entrance to the building, refusing to come out. At that moment Mörð came up to the entrance with still more armed men; Hrafn and his men drew back and the priest got out; then they attacked and he defended himself.

Þórð came up now and bade them enter bravely; the man who went in first was named Álmar, and ever at his side was Kolbein Dufgusson, while Þórð himself, Hrafn, and Nikulás all went in at the same time. Mörð and his men now moved back from the entrance into the room. Eyjólf was slow to wake up and was not yet armed by the time Mörð and his men entered the room.

The priest Bárð said, "Let us try to get out by the door which faces the fells, for no one was there just now."

So they did, and when they reached the doorway there was no one there; the priest Bárð ran out, got hold of a horse and saddled it. He told Eyjólf to mount the horse and ride as fast as he could to the fells: "As for me," he said, "there is no danger."

Eyjólf mounted and rode away. When Þórð and his men got into the room Mörð was injured, and so came outside. Þórð's men came up and struck at him, and there Mörð fell.

Þorstein bóndi got out but was captured and brought before Þórð. Þorstein declared that Sighvat would not have been killed there if he, Þorstein had had the most to say in the matter; he said he would offer Þórð everything he could in honor offer for his life, but that he would not beg Þórð for quarter in such a way as to make him feel dishonored. Many men now took a hand in the matter and offered their support to Þorstein; Ingun, the

mistress of the house, behaved with great dignity. Þórð said then that Þorstein should receive quarter; he stepped up to him and said that there were not many other men in the North Quarter with whom he had worse relations before he had gone abroad but that he would not now renew these: "Therefore take your weapons and your clothing and come with me."

Þorstein did so.

Þórð now went up to the pasture and asked who was lying out there. He was told that Mörð Eiríksson lay there; Þórð bade Hrafn go out to see how badly he was wounded; Hrafn went out and asked Mörð about his injuries; he said he could be cured and asked for quarter. Hrafn replied that he had best prepare himself not to receive quarter. Mörð asked why Þórð was so relentless toward him: "For up to now we have enjoyed a friendly relationship."

Hrafn said he must know that men believed he had wounded Sighvat and his son at Örlygsstaðir; Mörð said there was no truth in this; Hrafn then went back to Þórð and told him that Mörð could be healed. Þórð ordered a man named Árni Eiríksson to strike Mörð and he did so.

There was a man named Bjarni Húnröðarson who was wounded to death, and three others were also wounded. Þorstein went away with Þórð and they rode down through the valley. Teit and Svarthöfði arrived at Másstaðir and straightway rammed a pole against the doors, broke in and ran into the hall. Helgi jumped up as soon as he was aware of the attack and started for the door. He was a very strong man and pushed aside everyone so that men fell back from him into the living room. Then Svarthöfði attacked him and Helgi, who was wounded, asked for quarter. They said there was no possibility of quarter but bade him seek counsel and talk with a priest, and he did so. Then Helgi was led outside and a man named Álf Þorgilsson killed him. They then took the horses, along with whatever was indoors, and rode off to Giljá where they captured Einar Hallsson. His hand was struck off and he was wounded many times besides. They pillaged the farmstead there and rode off to Hólavað where Þórð and also Ásbjörn had arrived. Ásbjörn and his men had

pillaged everything at Breiðabólsstað except for living cattle. Hallvarð had escaped but Lær-Bjarni was fatally wounded, and many others had been wounded as well.

Þórð now rode west with his whole company and they pillaged everything in their way until they reached Miðfjörð, where Þórð allowed nothing to be taken. In the evening he rode on west to Hrútafjörð. There were two things Þórð most strongly enjoined on his men: they were to spare women and churches. Þórð now rode west to the Dales and so to Saurbær; from there he went out to Skarð. Þorstein Jónsson turned back from there after swearing an oath of allegiance to Þórð, and they parted in friendship. Þórð went back to the West Fjords to his homestead at Mýrar.

When Eyjólf Þorsteinsson got away he rode north to Flugumýr to Kolbein. Kolbein at once called up men and strengthened the guard; he maintained a strong force in one place or another for the whole summer because he thought he could thus give chase more swiftly if any invasion was made into his district.

19

When Þórð had been home for a short time he sent men out in every direction to call up a guard and this grew so extensive that every fighting man was summoned. Þórð then led his entire army down to Saurbær where, for the first time, Sturla rallied to his kinsman Þórð. Men were called up also from all over the Dales west of Brattabrekka and it was then estimated that Þórð's following must number about eight hundred. When they reached Ljárskógar he learned that a guard was stationed at Ásgeirsá, and Illugi's sons Ari and Rögnvald were the leaders of these men. Þórð sent word to Teit and Svarthöfði to attack this guard with sixty men. They rode north to Hrútafjörð in the evening and during the night onwards to the ridge of Miðfjörð. But it was then so dark that the men were separated; Teit and his men reached Auðunarstaðir with no more than nineteen men. They were spotted by the men of the north who were holding watch on horseback and who thought that a large force had arrived. These northerners then all sped up to the fells where the guard

was stationed. Ásbjörn rode to Ásgeirsá with some companions but saw to it that no one followed them. Teit and his men now turned away and rode south across Holtavörðuheið to Borgarfjörð; they met Þórð at Stafaholt, and Þórð then rode with his whole army to Ferjubakki where he remained.

Böðvar Þórðarson now came out from Stað; Þorleif Þórðarson also came out from Garðar, and they both had a large force. On Michaelmas Day Þórð held a meeting at Stafaholt. Sturla, Þorleif, and Böðvar were there. Þórð demanded support from his kinsmen for an expedition to the north or else for one south across the heath against one or the other of his enemies so that he might avenge the injuries done to him. But they said they would not support him in raids against other men, though they would ride to the Þing with him in the summer and support him in any judgments by which he could gain honor for himself. Þórð took this well and thanked them, saying he would accept this choice even though it meant more work for him. Then Þórð rode down to Ferjubakki and had all his forces sleep at Þjóðólfsholt overnight. The following morning at daybreak Hákon galin came down from the district where he had been on guard and reported that Kolbein Arnórsson had been at Fljótstunga overnight with thirty men. It seemed to all of them certain then that a large troop must have come into the district. Þórð bade his men keep their company together all day; his force was by then so large that it was estimated at twelve hundred men. But he himself rode up into the district to find out for certain what was going on. He rode up to Gilsbakki where he learned that Kolbein had ridden north to the heath. Þórð then sent men as spies north to Tvídægra while he himself remained at Ferjubakki. When the men returned they reported that there were three guard posts at Skagafjórð but that on the whole everything was quiet; they said that Kolbein had ridden south himself to reconnoiter because no one else was willing. Men thought this the clearest sign of Kolbein's rashness—that he rode with so few men against such large forces as there were. But when Þórð heard about this he dispersed his troops; Böðvar and Þorleif went home, while Þórð and Sturla rode to the West Fjords. All those who had taken

part in this expedition with Þórð now thought he would be a very great chieftain if he could keep himself from harm; men thought too that it was certainly deserving of high praise that he had been able to gather so large a force from so few places.

Þórð now went home to Myrar where he remained for the winter, right up to Christmas. At Christmas time he invited all the most prominent men of the West Fjords to come to him; he held a great feast at Mýrar at which he and all his men strengthened their promises to one another. Þórð renewed his vow never to allow a man to be seized in a church, no matter what the case against him, and he kept to that. When men went away he gave many of them gifts and they were all greater friends of his than before.

20

Þórð Bjarnarson spent that winter at Garðar with his kinsman Einar Ormsson. Einar had been at Reykjaholt with Órækja at the slaying of Klæng Bjarnarson.[22] Orm Bjarnarson rode with eleven men to Einar in Garðar; they arrived late in the evening just when Einar and Þórð were going to the baths. Orm had Þórð seized and led into the living room. Þórð showed great courage in every way and offered for himself all that he honorably could, but when he saw that Orm would settle for nothing less than his life he asked for a priest; this was granted him. After that he was led to the outer room; Þórð then lay down on his back and told them to see whether he blenched at all. Orm got a man named Einar munk to kill him. After this Orm rode home east to Breiðabólsstað.

21

It is next to be reported that Tumi Sighvatsson was not contented on Flatey and went in to Meðalfellsströnð to see the priest Snorri Narfason at Skarð. He was a very wealthy man in the West Fjords and came from a noble family. He had all his life been Sighvat's and Sturla's best friend. He had a second homestead at Hólar in Reykjanes which his sons Bárð and Sigmund

managed. Tumi asked Snorri to let him take over the establishment at Hólar until Removing Days; Snorri granted him this if he would produce men to stand surety for the agreement that Snorri could buy it back for the same amount in the spring. Tumi didn't try to find such guarantors but settled into the homestead at Hólar where men began to pour in to him, including Björn Dufgusson, Þorgeir stafsendi, and Þorkel Einarsson known as dráttarhamar.

Towards Christmas of that winter unfriendliness developed between Þórð Sighvatsson and Ásbjörn Guðmundarson; Ásbjörn became so arrogant that he considered himself nearly Þórð's equal. Þórð bade him either go off on his own or else show some moderation. Ásbjörn declared that Þórð didn't have to drive him away but this might be a good thing, for as soon as he had gone Þórð's achievement would be clearly seen; he added that he was sworn to the brother whom men would always think the best.

On the Feast of St. Þorlák, Ásbjörn rode off with his two brothers Grím and Þorkel hnjóðhamar. They rode south to Hólar where Tumi received them; they were there through Christmas and enjoyed much hospitality. Many other men also came in to Tumi at that time. Shortly after Christmas Tumi rode from home north to Hrútafjörð with seventeen men. Ásbjörn urged upon him the idea of undertaking some great deed, saying that in this way he would not be thought less important than his brother Þórð. They decided then to ride to the northern districts and attack some of the men who were enemies of the Sturlungs. When they reached Fagrabakki in Hrútafjörð Björn kægil asked Tumi what was the purpose of their expedition; Tumi said that he meant to ride north to attack some of the bóndis. Björn replied that their forces seemed to him small and that they had not enough horses either:

"My advice is that you stay behind and let us ride ahead wherever you wish," he said, adding that in this way they would lessen the risks.

Tumi said he wanted to ride with them; nevertheless it turned out that he stayed behind at Fjarðarhorn. Ásbjörn and Björn now rode north to the Línakradal to the farmstead named Múli.

A man named Magni was living there; he had long been a homeman of Kolbein at Flugumýr, and had been there for Christmas. When he went home Kolbein gave him a very fine horse, gray in color, and he was to keep a lookout for Þórð as soon as ever he stirred from the West Fjords. When Magni realized that enemies had come to the farmstead he tried to get out through a secret door, but he had gone only a short distance from the buildings when Björn and his companions spied him and ran after him. When Magni saw that he could not escape he turned to face them; he and Björn struck at one another but neither was wounded. Björn struck at him a second time and the blow drove into his neck from above the ear, a serious wound which promised to be fatal. Björn then seized him by the legs, threw him on his back and thrust at him with his sword, but this was only a slight wound. Ásbjörn now came up and asked why he did not kill him; Björn said he had now done all he wanted to Magni; but Ásbjörn went over and struck off his head.

After this they turned back; they learned that one of Kolbein's spies was at Torfustaðir, a man named Ásgeir, known as Kollu-Geir. They rode up and broke open the outer entrance-doors. Ásbjörn rode in and called out for lights. Kollu-Geir leapt up, snatched a short sword and a spear, one in each hand, and struck at Ásbjörn with both at the same time. One blow struck him in the chest and the other penetrated the lower part of his byrnie. Ásbjörn then said: "Get hold of this devil—he is about to kill me."

Ásgeir was seized and led out; Ásbjörn bade someone volunteer to kill Ásgeir but no one was willing. Ásbjörn then twisted the strap of his buckler round his hand and told Ásgeir to hold on to it; then he brandished his sword and declared he was now to lose his hand. He struck so that he severed the arm high up at the shoulder and the sword sliced down his arm sheer through the whole muscle right down to the elbow joint, a severe wound. Ásbjörn wanted to strike a second time but Björn told him to be content with this. Ásgeir was now carried indoors and bore his wounds very bravely. But he bled so greatly that they could not staunch the flow of blood, and Ásgeir died before Ásbjörn and his men rode off.

This same night there was a great thaw so that the waters rose in flood and the ice broke up. When Ásbjörn and his men reached Stað in Hrútafjörð the water was so high that they could not ride across at the ford and the whole river was almost impassable. They waited there far into the day for the water to subside, but when the day was well advanced they decided to cross the river at any cost for they thought it unlikely that anyone meant to pursue them. They rode up to the ford but turned away and rode on along the river; still they found nowhere they thought they could get across. Ásbjörn urged them to ride over, calling them cowards and declaring that they had not an ounce of courage. Björn said the river was impassable from where he was, on the bank. When they least expected it Ásbjörn leapt out into the river, but his horse at once lost his footing and both horse and rider went under. When Ásbjörn came up he was out of the saddle but hanging on to the stirrup. Those who were on the bank stretched a spear shaft out to him; but as he was reaching for this he lost hold of his horse. Ásbjörn drowned there and was not found until the following spring. After this his companions rode back to the ford, got across it with difficulty during the night and met Tumi at Fjarðarhorn. From there they rode west to the Dales and so on west to Hólar.

22

That same winter after Christmas Þórð prepared his expedition from Mýrar and went north to Ísafjörð; he sent Hrafn Oddsson and Svarthöfði south to the Dales to tell his friends that he intended to ride north to Skagafjörð.

At that time the serious injury suffered by Kolbein ungi at the battle at Örlygsstaðir began to trouble him so greatly that he nearly lost hope of living. That same winter he summoned his followers to a meeting at Geldingaholt; all the most prominent bóndis in the North Quarter came to this meeting. Kolbein offered them two choices; he spoke at length and gave his views about the strife between him and Þórð. He spoke of the loss of life in which each of them had a part. He declared that one

choice he could offer them was to go abroad, give up his whole realm to Þórð and thus compensate Þórð for his father and his brothers:

"You will then have to trust your affairs to his mercy. I believe that Þórð will always behave generously to you, for he behaved most generously to me when I placed the greatest trust in him. And his friends, the men of Skagafjörð, were by his side at that time too."[23]

The bóndis said they would not accept this choice for two reasons: "One is that we will not serve anyone but you as long as you live, and the second is that Þórð will consider we have done him so much hurt that we will be unable to bear the punishment he will lay upon us." Kolbein said the second choice was that "You maintain a watch for the rest of the winter, one in Skagafjörð, a second in Vatnsdal and a third in Víðidal," adding that a general call to arms would have to be raised as soon as word came—and this was quite likely—that Þórð was in one place or another.

The bóndis said that whatever it cost them they chose to stick together. Kolbein then spoke to Þorstein Hjálmsson, saying that he meant to send him to Þórð to settle on terms for a truce until after the Þing. Þorstein said he would not refuse to undertake this commission if he could have some brave men to go with him. Kolbein bade him choose one man to accompany him; Þorstein said he would take the captain Eyvind bratt, and Kolbein agreed to this.

They all three then talked together; Þorstein asked Kolbein for the love of God to give him some basis for the reconciliation to offer Þórð. Kolbein said he wanted him to offer a settlement of equal advantage to both sides. Þorstein replied that Þórð would consider only one settlement equally acceptable—that he be granted all his properties. Kolbein declared that he had taken all these over legally and was emphatic that he would not give up any of them without legal action. Þorstein and his companion now rode off, and Kolbein also rode their way with his men as far as Jökulsá. Þorstein then asked Kolbein if he would expand his offer somewhat if Þórð had come some distance with his force

from the West Fjords but had put more restraint on his men than before. Kolbein said that Þorstein had heard about his talk with the bóndis at their meeting together,

"And considering how things stood between us then," he said, "I will promise to give up to my kinsman Þórð all the North Quarter and leave it entirely to his control; but I insist that all men are to be given quarter, with safety of life and limb."

Þorstein asked him to make this statement to Eyvind, for he had ridden ahead, but Kolbein said there was no need for more men to know this:

"The men of the east are often indiscreet, so I might make this offer, or grant this, only if you agree that we do not at present have peace in every respect."

Þorstein and his companions now rode on until they came west into the Dales where they at once learned that Þórð had come from the west. They met him at Skarð and he and Þorstein went aside to talk. Þorstein delivered Kolbein's message both about a truce and about a reconciliation. Þórð said he would not agree to any truce and declared that he would not submit his properties or his authority in Eyjafjörð to the judgment of anyone. Þorstein and Eyvind thought they understood from this that Þórð meant to ride north and they took thought for their preparations; they also found out that Sturla meant to accompany Þórð's expedition. Therefore Þorstein brought forward the full offer Kolbein had made; Eyvind said he could not confirm this because he had not heard the declaration. Þorstein gave his word on the offer if Þórð would believe it. Þórð then took counsel with his friends, many of whom were in favor of the offer. Þórð agreed to a truce until Easter Week and agreed to a reconciliation. Þorstein was then pledged to send a man from the north down to Þórð during Lent to report whether Kolbein meant to fulfill this offer of reconciliation and also whether there were any other conditions.

Þorstein now rode north to meet with Kolbein while Þórð went to the West Fjords. When Þorstein reached the north and gave his messages to Kolbein, Kolbein declared that he had never said he would give up the North Quarter to Þórð. Þorstein claimed

that however closely men might question him he had not made any offer Kolbein himself had not authorized. Kolbein agreed, however, to a truce until after Easter Week but he would not agree to what Þorstein had offered Þórð in his name.

With this Þorstein rode home to the west, very ill-pleased with the situation and saying that he would never again go on a mission of reconciliation on Kolbein's behalf. And he at once had men sent west to Þórð to tell him how matters stood. When people learned about this they spoke very disparagingly about Þorstein.

23

In the spring during Easter Week Kolbein had a meeting with his followers and many of the men from Eyjafjörð were present. Kolbein then told all his friends to make ready for he intended to ride to the west immediately after Easter Week. He summoned the men of Eyjafjörð from the north to meet him on an appointed day. Hall of Möðruvellir came south, and Þorvard Þórðarson from Saurbær, Þorvard Önólfsson from Miklagarð, and Guðmund Gíslsson from below Hvassafel. When they reached Skagafjörð the force was assembled.

Brand Kolbeinsson from Stað and his cousin Broddi Þorleifsson now rode in to join Kolbein's expedition. They rode in with their forces west to Langadal, where men had been called up, all the way to Miðfjörð. Kolbein then rode west to Stað in Hrútafjörð where they rested; they had about three hundred men. Kolbein divided his force into two companies; he put Brand Kolbeinsson and Broddi Þorleifsson each at the head of a company. They rode to Laxárdal; he told them to push forward bravely and remember the expedition to Vatnsdal. It was made clear that they were to kill Sturla Þórðarson if they caught him as well as Dufgus' son Björn drumb. Kolbein announced that he himself intended to ride with his company to attack Tumi Sighvatsson at Reykjahólar, and that they were to meet each other at Gilsfjarðarbotn where they might then turn back north. When they rode across the ford at Hrútafjörð people saw them from

the other side of the fjord and men sped west to the Dales and thence west to Saurbær.

Sturla now went west to the islands while Böðvar from Hvál, Þorgeir stafsendi, and Hall from Tjaldanes went across to Hólar to tell Tumi that they expected an attack. Tumi acted at once: he had a ship put out and posted men as a watch to see that it did not run aground. He sent Björn kægil Dufgusson, along with Þorkel Árnason and Halldór barm, into Króksfjörð where they were to keep watch on horseback. They rode into the farmstead named Tindar where Þórð Gilsson was then living; from there they could see in past Króksfjörð, and there they held watch.

It is now time to take up where we left off earlier when Kolbein was riding out along Hrútafjörð. When he reached Torfi in Bær his son Gils ran out, intending to warn their neighbors. But Kolbein and his men saw him and gave chase; Gegnir Illugason reached him first and at once drove his weapon through him. Gils died there. Men thought the deed very bad, for Gils and his father were completely innocent. Kolbein and his men now rode to Bitra that evening and during the night took over the whole establishment; the following morning they rode to Kleifar where they received reliable news that reports of their activities had preceded them all the way to Reykjahólar. Many then declared that it was useless to ride on and demanded that they turn back, for they said Tumi was certainly not at home now. Kolbein replied that the men were to ride on anyway, and that Tumi would be at home if he was destined to die. They rode out then along Gilsfjörð. Gunnstein Hallsson and his son Vigfús were living in Garpsdal at that time. Kolbein and his men left everything undisturbed there but nowhere else, and people were very suspicious about the reason for this. It was promptly reported that on their expedition they injured or wounded every fighting man and stole all the goods they could get their hands on.

There was such heavy fog that day that no one could see the troop before it entered the homestead. For Björn and his men too this meant that they could see no one until they were right on them; Björn and his companions then ran for their horses. Halldór was killed instantly inside the enclosure, while Þorkel

was only a short distance from the enclosure when they killed him. Björn then ran up into the hills and so got away; he hoped then to get down to Króksfjörð, for he knew where a ship was lying there. He thought he could reach it, since his horse was sturdy, and could get word to Hólar; but when he came down from the ridge between Kamb and Tindar the men in the vanguard stood in his way. He had escaped only a short distance because he was still on foot. Bersi Tumason attacked him first and Björn asked for quarter. Bersi told him he could have quarter and led him away to Kolbein, but Kolbein asked why Bersi didn't strike at him. Five of them attacked him at the same time and all the blows struck deep; then Óttar the bishop's kinsman struck Björn in the neck, and Björn died. Men said that he was laughing when he died.

They rode now to Kamb where Magnús received quarter, at the urging of Hall of Möðruvellir. They rode on to Bær in Króksfjörð. There was a man named Stein Arason living there; his son was Ari, a man of about twenty years. The father and son were sitting in the living room when Þorvarð matkrák came in; Þorvarð at once struck at Stein, cutting off both his hands which had been resting on his knees as he sat there. Then he struck at his son Ari, wounding him seriously.

From there they rode out to Reykjanes.

24

When they were riding along by Miðhús the men at Hólar were outside arguing about whether it could be a line of cattle or a troop of mounted men. To those who were destined to die it seemed to be cattle, but the women maintained it was a mounted troop. This was Tuesday, four days before the Feast of Bishop Jón. Tumi and his men did not manage to get far from the enclosure before the troop came right down opposite Hólar and some into the enclosure itself. Some of them headed for the ship and others ran in other directions. Bárð Snorrason, called Skarð-priest, was slain at once, a short distance from the enclosure. He had pulled his horse in close to him and tried three

times to mount—he was one of the best of horsemen—but he could not manage to get up. At Örlygsstaðir he had received twelve wounds; he now received the thirteenth, and died. Bishop Guðmund had conseerated him as a mass-priest and when he had just been conseerated the bishop had felt his head with his hand and said, "You, my son, will receive no wounds in your head."

And that was true: he received thirteen wounds, but none in his head.

Grím, the son of Guðmund Sólómonsson, was fatally wounded a short distanee from Biskupsbrunn;[24] he had erawled into the spring during the night but was carried home in the morning and given final rites. Böðvar of Hvál ran out when the attaek first began but was eaptured, and when more men eame up to the attaek they struek him at onee; he fell to his death near Grím. Þorgeir stafsendi defended himself ably as did Þorkel dráttarhamar; Þorgeir fell there but Þorkel was eaptured and quarter granted him beeause many of his friends were in Kolbein's party. Árni Bóthildarson got farthest away from the enelosure but was killed down on the ness.

Hjálm of Víðivellir, Ásgrím, and Stefán now seized Tumi, who had earlier been slightly wounded, and brought him to Kolbein. This Stefán was a brother of Þórarin balti. Tumi asked for quarter and Kolbein agreed to this, but the men of Skagafjörð offered him the same quarter his brothers had been given at Örlygsstaðir. Kolbein then told Þórarin grautnef to kill him. Tumi made his confession with great dignity; he was then led south of the ehurchyard and there killed. Kolbein stayed there overnight; his men stole all the horses and movable goods and then rode away. They wounded many men there even though we do not name them all here. The priests took Tumi's body away and attended to it.

25

It is now time to tell of Brand and his men who rode down into Laxárdal, pillaging and striking everyone. At Gröf in Laxárdal they killed the son of Oxi Másson; at Hjarðarholt they pillaged

everything they could get their hands on, but Björn got away. Then they rode into Hvammsfjörð. At Leiðólfsstaðir Hall Hallsson was slain; at Sverting's place in Hvamm there was pillaging, and his housecarle, named Gils, was killed at Ak. After that they rode to Saurbær and rode at great risk into Gilsfjörð. They met with Kolbein at Kleifar; they had killed thirteen men on this expedition and wounded many. After this they rode to Hrútafjörð. There was a man named Loðin who lived at Fjarðarhorn; they tricked him into coming out of the chapel and then cut off his feet. After these actions Kolbein rode home to Flugumýr well pleased with his expedition.

But those men whom Tumi had posted to watch the ship had set sail for Flatey as soon as they were aware of the attack; from there news was carried west to Arnarfjörð and Þórð was told that Tumi was in the church while Kolbein surrounded the place. Þórð ordered his men to arm at once and go to the ship. The ship was thrust out to sea but sank instantly because of the strong gale; so the men returned. Þórð then called upon God to abate the storm and straightway the wind fell. Þórð now went by ship into Otradal where men had arrived from Barðaströnd; they reported the full news of everything that had occurred during the forays of Kolbein and his men, and reported also that Þuríð Orm's daughter had come out to Flatey with her son by Tumi (his name was Sighvat) and wanted to see Þórð as soon as possible. He went to meet her in Flatey as quickly as he could. Þórð's men also came out from Króksfjörð at that time; they had captured a man named Loðin Ingimundarson who had been with Kolbein on the expedition to Hólar. Þórð had him taken north to Ferjuvág and appointed a man named Þorkel to kill him. Þorkel was a brother of Ásbjörn Guðmundarson and Grím. Þuríð asked Þórð about the properties Tumi had owned and how they would be divided now. Þórð replied that he thought there was little to divide even though they had held some land together in the Dales.

"It seems to me best," he said, "for you to keep the property which we owned in this district, while I keep whatever I can get from Kolbein's and my joint possessions."

She agreed to this and they shook hands on the agreement. Þuríð thought this had been done out of affection for her. They included in their agreement all the lands which Sighvat had owned, if it was necessary to take them over. Nikulás Oddsson, Teit Styrmisson, Kolbein grön, Hrafn Oddsson, and many others were witnesses. People praised Þórð for this, for everyone thought he had behaved well. After this Þuríð Orm's daughter went to Sauðafel where she made her home during the following year.

Þórð went from Flatey to the West Fjords but sent Ingjald Geirmundarson south to Borgarfjörð to demand fulfillment of the promise which Sturla Þórðarson, Böðvar, and Þorleif had made him in the autumn at Ferjubakki, that they would support him at law at the Þing. When Ingjald met Þorleif and the brothers they spoke their minds bluntly, stating that they would not ride to the Þing with Þórð. For them as for many other men it was easier to promise support to Þórð than to quarrel with Kolbein. As they backed out of this affair Sturla said, as was true, that Þórð and he had not enough force to ride to the Þing against the superior might of Kolbein and the men of the south, but still, he said, he wanted to give Þórð all the help he could. Ingjald then went to the West Fjords and told Þórð how matters stood.

That same winter Kolbein sent Einar dragi with some other men north to Langanes to kill the sons of Blasíus, Álmgeir, and another man. It now happened that the men of Eyjafjörð and those men who had been friends of Sighvat found it hard to bow to the conditions men were forced to endure through Kolbein's slayings and robberies. So it came about that men sent word to Þórð saying they would help him if he would come north with some force and join them.

26

After the slaying of Tumi Sighvatsson, Þórð was deeply concerned that many of his kinsmen and relatives withheld their support from him; he did not clearly know what course to follow now. He gave up his homestead at Mýrar, and Hrafn Oddsson

offered to let him take over the homestead at Eyr. Þórð aeeepted this and thanked him warmly for this as for the other friendly serviees Hrafn had proffered. They deeïded now that Þórð was to have all the largest ships in the West Fjords fitted out, and for this he ehose men who were fully equipped.

Teit Styrmisson eame from Breiðafjörð to meet him with one ship; his homemen and the men of Barðaströnd aeeompanied him. Svarthöfði and Hrafn eommanded one ship, and the men of Arnarfjörð aeeompanied them. Bárð of Sandar had the ship named Rauðsíða, the largest of all Þórð's ships, which had on board men from Arnarfjörð and Dýrafjörð. Helgi Halldórsson and Ingjald Geirmundarson were in eommand of a ten-oared ship. Bjarni Brandsson and Pál grís, Kálf's son, commanded a ship named Trékyllir; with them were men from Dýrafjörð. Kolbein grön and Hákon galin eommanded a ehureh-ferry from Holt; with them were men from Önundarfjörð. A seeond ship from Önundarfjörð was a ten-oared boat whieh Sigurð rábiti, Eyvind's son, eommanded. Three ships were fitted out from Ísafjörð; Nikulás Oddsson, Eyjólf Eyjólfsson, and Sigmund Gunnarsson eaptained Ógnarbrandin, a large eutter; with them were men from Ísafjörð. Bárð Hjörleifsson eommanded a ten-oared ship; another ten-oarer was eommanded by Sigurð vegglág, a Norwegian. Ketil Guðmundarson and Álmar Þorkelsson eommanded a ship named Snækoll whieh they had taken in Hornstrandir; with them was the Guest foree. Þórð kakali commanded a large ship; aboard it were his horsemen and a group of men he thought the most able. In every ship he plaeed some of his homemen whom he most trusted.

27

When these twelve ships were ready Þórð led them north aeross Ísafjarðardjúp and on north to Hornstrandir. There his kinsman Ari Ingimundarson joined him; he was then eighteen years old.

Before Þórð sailed out of the West Fjords he had sent word to Sturla Þórðarson that he was to lead the defense in that part

of the west, should any strife be raised by the northerners. While Þórð was at Hornstrandir the weather turned against him, and there was no place to take refuge in the vicinity. For five days the men had no provisions; Þórð then, with great difficulty, rowed with his men the whole way along Hornstrandir until they reached Trékyllisvík two nights before the Feast of John the Baptist, which was then on the Friday. There was a great slaughtering of livestock as they moved along the coast. On the Eve of the Feast of St. John, Þórð stationed all the ships out beneath Trékyllisey and held a meeting of all his forces.

Ásgrím Bergþórsson came to Þórð and told him that Kolbein was gathering troops from north of Flói; that he had collected many ships; that he was heading towards Þórð and planned to meet him at sea, though he had also sent some of his troops west by land. But he could not say which group Kolbein was with. Þórð and his men thought that either these were wild rumors which one could not trust about Kolbein's collecting troops, or else that the force was no larger than it had been when it came from the north the preceding summer to Ísafjörð. Ásgrím then went home.

Þórð now talked at length with his troops; he reminded the men of their losses and urged them strongly to behave as valiantly as possible even if they ran some danger. He also instructed them to head for the same harbor, get ashore at once and begin to gather spoils. Further, he had some hope of support if he should reach Eyjafjörð, though he had not more than ninety to one hundred men now. Men then loaded their ships with stones and prepared to set sail. Þórð and his troop rowed in past Reykjanes; there was an east wind through the bay so that the wind died in the sails, and Þórð's fleet therefore sailed to Flói.

28

It is now time to tell about Kolbein. When spring came he collected all the big ships in the North Quarter and had them brought together into Skagafjörð; he then carried out his preparations in the harbor called Selvík.

It happened that when the men of Eyjafjörð were getting ready below Hrísey, before they sailed round from the north to Skagafjörð with their ships, and were moving about among their boats, a man named Jón fell into the water and never came to the surface; this seemed to the men an ill omen.

When these ships were all ready and had reached Skagafjörð the whole force had also arrived from across Öxnadalsheið, as was expected. Kolbein now divided his force into two companies and put Brand Kolbeinsson at the head of one company. He was to take his group by land to the West Fjords; he had two hundred men with him. When Brand reached Miðfjörð he got reliable news about Þórð's expeditions, learning that he had reached Strandir and intended to sail north across Flói. Brand now took up his position in Miðfjörð and meant to wait there until he learned where Þórð would turn. But when Sturla Þórðarson learned that Brand had reached Miðfjörð with his company and meant to go to the western district he at once gathered together a force. Þorgils Böðvarsson and Vigfús Gunnsteinsson joined his force; they rode north over Haukadalsskarð with nearly two hundred men. They rested when they were north of the pass. Sturla's spies then came back to him and reported that Brand was in Miðfjörð and behaving most cautiously. Þorgils then urged the men to ride against them boldly, but Vigfús replied that although he would support Sturla by defending the district with him, he would never, he declared, invade others' territories with hostile intent. They discussed this at great length but reached no agreement. Þorgils said that he wanted them to ride north against Brand as briskly as possible and not get entangled in lengthy debate. Sturla said that he would willingly see them continue north if none of the leaders sheered off from the expedition; he said there would be only a weak force for attacking if all the leaders were not of the same mind. Vigfús then left this discussion and rode away with his men. The whole assembly under Sturla and his troops now dispersed and Sturla rode west to the Dales. When Brand and his men learned the news about Sturla and his forces they left their position and rode north to Skagafjörð, where Brand intended to increase his own forces.

When Kolbein was ready to set sail it was reported that men had come to him from the south and told him that Gizur Þorvaldsson had returned to Iceland, at Eyr in the south, and demanded a meeting with Kolbein. But Kolbein said that he had now made his preparations for an expedition which he would not give up at any cost. On the Eve of the Feast of St. John, Kolbein sailed out past Skagi and so west across Flói. He had twenty ships and almost one hundred and ten men of the fourth hundred[25] of men. Kolbein himself commanded a ship which was almost too big to be seaworthy, was diverted in three parts by cross-beams and also had a shelter up by the mast. Ásbjörn Illugason commanded another ship. Sökku-Guðmund was in charge of a large transport-ship, while Ketil Gnúpsson and the men of Grímsey also had a large ship. Hjalti Helgason from Leirhöfn commanded a large transport; Hrani Koðránsson was also in command of a ship, while Einar dragi commanded a ship of his own. Óttar, the bishop's kinsman, had a transport-ship; Víga-Bút commanded a large transport; and although we are not counting up all the ships' commanders from the north Kolbein still had many of the most valiant men for each ship. One might also note that all of Kolbein's ships were fully equipped, with shields forward by the mast. No man in our country had seen ships so fully prepared for battle. Kolbein sailed west then across Flói intending not to land until they were west of Horn.

It is now to be reported that Þórð sailed from the west across Flói; when his fleet reached the middle of the bay a man named Þorgeir but known as kornasylgja, on Ketil Guðmundarson's ship, said he had looked out across the water and discovered there were seals lying on the ice floes. When other men looked out, they too said Kolbein's ships were sailing out there. They dropped their sails then and took counsel. Many men said they ought to row out at once against those others, for now there was no wind. But to some this seemed out of the question, for they could all see that they were greatly outnumbered. The advice of wise heads was then that they should make some vow, so Þórð prayed to God Almighty, to Mary the Holy Mother of God, and to St.

Óláf the king for assistance; the promise made was that all the men then with Þórð would fast on bread and water every Friday for the next twelve months, would fast every Saturday to the beginning of winter, and would further have twelve months' tithes purchased for the soul of King Harald Sigurðarson. This vow was made fast by shaking hands on it. Þórð then ordered his men to make ready to row; they decided at once which ships were to set sail and as soon as they were ready began rowing across Flói to meet the enemy. When Kolbein's men saw Þórð's ships rowing out from the bay they reefed their sails and drew their ships together by means of ropes—this was nearer Skagi than Horn and it was then the hour of morning when the sun had just risen. Kolbein stationed his ship almost in the center of the fleet; Sökku-Guðmund's ship lay on the wing opposite Skagi and nearest to Horn. Kolbein and his men now turned their ships' prows to face the land. When Þórð came within range of Kolbein's ship he bade his men lash their own ships together and then row ahead. This was done in such a way that Ógnarbrandrin, which Nikulás Oddsson commanded, was nearest Horn facing Ásbjörn Illugason's ship, and next to them Þórð stationed his own ship. Then came Helgi Halldórsson's ship, then Teit Styrmisson's. On the other wing facing Sökku-Guðmund's ship was Sanda-Bárð's. And other men placed their ships in between these wherever they felt bold enough to move in.

Þórð now went forward on his ship and when there was quiet he spoke; he offered a truce to the Eyjafirðings and to all the men from north of Öxnadalsheið. But when Kolbein's men heard where the speech was tending they thought it not unlikely that some of their men might lose heart—those whose kinsmen had died at Örlygsstaðir and were still not compensated for. One of Kolbein's men now replied; he bade their foes be still, declaring that they would never be reconciled:

"You will walk the same path your brother Tumi walked last spring at Hólar, but yours will be rougher since you show you are marked for death."

Each side now raised its war cry and battle was joined. Kolbein's men opened the fighting by hurling missiles and stones.

The attack was furious until the ships came close together, then each fought stem-to-stem.

30

Hard fighting now began, at first with missiles and stone-throwing. Þórð's men threw so furiously that Kolbein's men could do nothing for a while but protect themselves. The battle now went against the men from the north, largely for two reasons: Kolbein's men had only a small supply of stones on two ships, while Þórð's men had loaded every ship with stones; secondly, on Kolbein's ships there were only some few men who knew anything about what they were expected to do on a ship, while on Þórð's ships each man was an even more knowledgeable seaman than the next. It is therefore understandable that in such circumstances victory in a battle between chieftains may be determined by fortune. This, however, was not because either side lacked the finest choice of men.

Before the hail of stones was ended almost all of Kolbein's men had fallen back by the mast on each ship. Þórð exhorted his men to board them, and Eyjólf Eyjólfsson, Nikulás Oddsson, and Sigmund Gunnarsson were the first men up on Kolbein's ship; when Kolbein and his men saw this they pressed forward and drove them all overboard at the point of the sword. They were pulled out of the sea and into their own ship. Now the battle began to engage all the forces; men fought savagely, especially those near the mast where the supply of stones was most depleted. The toll of men who died grew longer, particularly in Kolbein's forces. None of Þórð's men fought as boldly as he himself, as Ingjald Geirmundarson says in his *Atlöguflokkr*,[26] which he composed about this sea fight in Flói. And this is noteworthy because Ingjald was present at the battle and composed his poem in the winter immediately following:

1. Stones rained against Þórð,
   Thundered on men,
   Shields sundered in battle—
   A tumult of fighting.

That warrior split shields—
Sword deep in men's bodies,
Spear reddened by blood,
Weapons ravaged by war.

2. Shields reddened from stone-blows
—Spears gutting the fallen—
Men maimed by stone-casting
—Mistar's strong blasts—
Ships ravaged and ruined.
Bodies fell lifeless
In the bloody water,
Dulling the bright shield of Óðin.[27]

And this:

3. Wherever spears clashed
Þórð was the winner;
Sighvat's bold son
Among thundering shields.
This brave warrior, I know,
Stood fearless in battle
While many men's blood
Ran down in the sea.

Each ship now moved as near as possible to the next for close fighting. The battle now turned against Kolbein and his men for the large ship on which he himself was fighting could not be moved forward nor could many another of their largest ships; there was therefore some disorder in their rank and that very same moment the battle turned against Kolbein's men. He himself had taken little part in the fighting all day, primarily because he was not very strong and thought he was hardly fit for great labors. But everyone knew that Kolbein was a very brave man and supremely skilled in the use of arms. He stood at the masthead of his "castle" and directed the battle from there. When he saw that it was not certain they could win this way he called to his men, telling some of them to leave his ship for those which lay alongside and thus get away. But Hjalti Helgason from

Leirhöfn bade him move his ship stern-end to Þórð's ship and ordered the other commanders to move theirs stern-end to the ships of the men from the west, and thus encircle them:

"For it would be a great disgrace," he said, "if they defeated you with so few and such small ships as they have against the enormous fleet we have brought together here."

They loosed the ships from the ropes and moved off as Kolbein had ordered. The battle had now reached the stage where the foremost of Þórð's men had managed to board, and others were just about to board, ships in Kolbein's fleet. Many things now happened at the same time, and they are all important to relate, but still they must be recounted one at a time.

This attack did great harm to Kolbein's forces before the keenest of his men attacked Þórð's men on the flank at a moment when Þórð and his companions had left the sterns of their ships quite unprotected, and when the greater part of their group had all moved forward to the mast. By the time the shout reached Þórð's ship that they were now being attacked from both sides they had no choice but to face both attacks. Þórð now went aft on his ship, as did many of his men, but he had too small a force to be able to divide his company. He urged them to drive back the enemy by threatening their rear, and just at this very moment to attack most vigorously. Then he at once ordered them to board Hjalti's ship, and here there was little resistance before they succeeded in boarding. The man named Aron, the son of Halldór Ragnheiðarson, was first to board and next was Þórð himself. Þórð struck Hjalti right through his byrnie and his body so that he nailed him dead to the ship's side. That ship was so completely ravaged that nearly every man was killed or driven overboard. And few were helped up from the water.

While Þórð was engaged in this Kolbein's men had brought grappling-hooks to his ship and dragged it out from among their other craft. Án Áskelsson, Snorri Loftsson, and Steinólf Þorbjarnarson fell by the mast on Þórð's ship for none of them was minded to flee. A fourth man named Klemet also fell there, wounded by both Kolbein's and Þórð's men. But all the others fled to whichever ship was nearest. There was now a wide gap

between the ships. When Kolbein's men boarded Þórð's ship a hard fight faced those who were on the nearest ships. At the same time Kolbein grön, Teit Styrmison, and many others had succeeded in boarding Kolbein's own ship. But when Kolbein's homemen whom he had sent forward against them eame up, Teit and Kolbein grön were pushed back and driven overboard; only with difficulty did they get baek to their own side. The battle now inereased greatly in fury; Kolbein's men got grappling-hooks on Teit's ship and dragged it forward among their ships. In this struggle Teit and Ásgrím baulufót were wounded and the majority of the men on board fled the ship. Teit then ran to Kolbein Dufgusson's ship whieh was then so overladen and crowded that water was pouring in over the prow and the rowlocks. The greater part of them then dashed to Sanda-Bárð's ship.

The battle now began to break up and men ran frantically from ship to ship. When Þórð intended to go aft in his ship he found that it was deserted and that he had no men with whom to mount an attack. He moved over to Svarthöfði's ship where he stayed for a time, but when he saw that Nikulás Oddson and Eyjólf and all their eompany were driven baek to the mast-head on Ógnarbrandrin, and that the enemy was about to board, he sprang up on their ship and vigorously exhorted the men to take heart. He himself ran forward first of all to the prow, holding his shield over his head and a sword in his left hand. The most valiant men now followed him and there followed a furious encounter in whieh both sides suffered injury. Kolbein's men had earlier fixed an anchor at the prow of their ship. Þórð and his men now pressed forward so vigorously that in the struggle the anchor broke loose.

All the men from the north now recognized Þórð and each urged the others not to let him eseape now that he was so nearly in their hands. Þórð said, "You have the right idea—attack us briskly now, for indeed the leader of the West Fjords will show himself undaunted before you this day. Furthermore, my mind tells me that never again will you have so favorable an opportunity to attack me."

The northerners now attacked in full force while at the same

time the boldest of Þórð's men came up from other ships. This struggle came to an end in such a way that none of those who went forward with Þórð escaped injury. Those who were aft in the ship suddenly discovered how the bilge water was rising and Sigmund Gunnarson ordered them to bail it out. The fighting on the ships now gradually abated, and all the ten-oared boats cut themselves loose from the ropes except for Helgi Halldórsson's. Jón from Álftamýr was first to escape, a little afterwards Bárð Hjörleifsson, and next Sigurð vegglág. Svarthöfði called out to Sigurð and bade him wait; he did so and Svarthöfði went on board along with Hrafn snati and some other men. Svarthöfði bade his kinsman Hrafn accompany him, and Hrafn asked what he knew about Þórð's situation now. He said he knew nothing about him, and Hrafn then told him to go off wherever he wished, "But here is Óttar snoppulang who killed your brother."

Svarthöfði said that was no concern of his and added that this time victory had gone to those who were destined to win. Svarthöfði had then received a severe wound but Hrafn did not know this. Svarthöfði and his companions now rowed away to land. When Teit had fled from his ship Kolbein's men climbed up on it; on Kolbein Dufgusson's ships men were so overborne by their enemies' weapons that they couldn't hold their positions; everyone then deserted the ship entirely and Kolbein stood alone.

His men seized him and began to drag him backwards toward them from one ship to another, but in the course of this he received four wounds—three in the thigh (two of these right through the thigh), and one in the side of his foot, so that the stroke sheared right down to his big toe, a severe wound.

Ketil Guðmundarson and Álmar Þorkelsson pressed forward quite fearlessly, while Bjarni Brandsson and Pál grís also held their ground valiantly; the retreat came to a fortunate end for them. Sanda-Bárð had the highest ship and kept it well forward so that most of the men to whom it seemed the best shelter sought it out. Bárð and his companions did not meet there until the ship was so laden that it was about to sink beneath them. At this moment the battle consisted mainly of men's hurling short swords and pole-axes from one ship to another while they also hurled

spears, seal harpoons and whale harpoons, striking with whatever they could get their hands on, even with sail spars and oar handles. Most men were by then playing a pretty rough game, and most of them were beginning to grow rather tired from the contest; a great many of them tried therefore to keep out of the gravest danger, but in such a way that they didn't lay themselves open to the charge of cowardice. On the ship where Þórð and his men were they were steadily bailing out water but were nearing the point when they could carry on no longer. They now discovered that the ship was damaged below. Sigmund and Nikulás begged them to put out the oars and row away, but when Þórð heard of this he bade them not incur the shame of fleeing from battle. They replied that some ships had already fled, "and this ship is damaged almost beyond use."

All the other ships, they said, were ready to take to flight and sail away. But Þórð did not believe them until he himself went to see the bilge water. Meanwhile they had the ship turned back by using the oars and next turned right around. As soon as Þórð's forces on the other ships saw that he was giving up, each commander ordered his men to pull out of the line of battle, and each ship sailed off as soon as it was able. About this Ingjald composed a verse:

4. Long since to the sea
Shield-warrior had fled
—From this harsh storm of spears,
This tempest of swords—
Had his sea-steeds' riders
But moved with more speed.
Óðin's shield was reddened,
Was wet with their blood.

Ingjald now spoke also of how many among Kolbein's ships were destroyed in this sea battle:

5. Warriors fought savagely
And Þórð, honor-bound,
Hobbled their sea-steed—
Men knew this.

I've learned that the victor
Granted life not death,
Though Hjalti of Leirhöfn
Paid dear for this gift.

And Ingjald also reported this about the odds in this battle:

6. "My fleet split in two,
Struck by swords' lightning;
War ravaged our weapons."
This, I have learned,
Forced the brave shield-wielder
—Óðin's champion in arms—
To free his torn forces
From Gunnar's harsh chains.[28]

When Þórð's ship had turned about he called to Hrafn Oddsson, asking him to bring him some men. Hrafn said it looked as if each one would be one too many; then he jumped aboard with Þórð and four men followed him. They held in towards land as did every other ship when ready. There was much discussion on board Þórð's ship about how long the battle had lasted, and they were agreed that the sun was by now about in the middle of the southern part of the land, but that when they had joined battle the sun had just risen.

Þórð was very anxious because it seemed by now certain that Sanda-Bárð's ship and also Trékyllir, which Bjarni Brandsson commanded, were missing. Men thought the reason Kolbein had not pursued the ships which fled was that he had those two in his hands. Bárð and his crew had lost all but one of the oars from all four ships. Bjarni now went alongside them and took off nearly thirty of their crew, he got for them as many oars as they needed, and they now all rowed away together. Kolbein's men rowed after them in two small ships but dared not attack when they came near; they turned back then to their fleet. Kolbein stayed in the bay awaiting an onshore wind because the transport-ships were difficult to row.

Þórð and his men rowed as hard as they could and steered in below Reykjanes, thinking that was the shortest course to land. They stood in there and disembarked; they brought water back to the ship, for many of them had grown very thirsty; it was then three in the afternoon. Þórð bade Hrafn Oddsson go to his ship and row ahead into Árnes where he was to have all the horses in the neighborhood of Trékyllisvík seized.

"I want those men who are most seriously wounded," he said, "to be able to escape from their enemies with the aid of horses; but those men who are perfectly able to walk and can escape on foot are not to have horses. The rest we will carry up onto the fells."

Hrafn now carried out this order while Þórð moved on more slowly. When Þórð reached Trékyllisvík he recognized Sanda-Bárð's ferry and also Trékyllir which they were then rowing in from sea. There was very great rejoicing when they met each other. They mustered their men and discovered that they had lost only a few men, but that almost every man who had been with Þórð was wounded to some extent; but in general the men were not severely wounded.

Þórð assembled his forces and held a council. He thanked his men for their valiant support and went on to speak of this in many fair terms:

"I expect that now, today, it will seem to you that luck has turned toward us and away from Kolbein, now that we know how very large a force, as I see it, the enemy had on their side in comparison to ours. But now I ask you, my brave warriors, each to suggest what you think best for us to do; for our position is such that as soon as Kolbein gets an onshore wind he will sail west, and it seems to me that we are unlikely to succeed in escaping by ship inasmuch as we have lost all the wooden equipment from most of our ships. Therefore I want you to consider this situation with me."

Men now all gave quite different opinions. Most of those who owned ships urged that they should not leave them, but those who did not own ships cared more for what seemed to them

least dangerous to do, and thus the debate went back and forth on these same arguments. When Þórð saw that there was little to be gained from a council of so many men he spoke:

"You have now shown me such loyalty, my good companions and kinsmen, and have today supported me so nobly, that there will scarcely be found in our whole land another example of men's having to face so superior a force and fighting against it so valiantly—may God reward you! But I do not mean to reward you for this by leading you now into new danger for my sake, for one brave man seems to me of greater worth than all those ships. There is no need to be long-winded about this—let men clear their ships and take all the fittings and any other belongings into the church. Furthermore, all those men who are wounded and who cannot go on with us are to go into the church. But those men are to go along with us who we think will not be granted the sanctuary of the church."

By the time of the evening meal this was all accomplished and Þórð turned on his way up along the fell from Árnes. Teit Styrmisson, Egil Sölmundarson, Kolbein grön, Ásgrím baulufót parted from him there along with all those who he thought were in no condition to accompany him. He arranged for horses for them and unwounded men to accompany them; they were to go down to Steingrímsfjörð. When they had gone but a short distance on the fell Ásgrím became so exhausted from his wounds that he could go no farther; he was left behind there with Gunnar nautatík and some others. But Þórð and the group with him went on up along the valley which is a short way above Árnes. When they had gone that far his company called for a rest.

32

Now it is time to report how Kolbein and his men remained behind in the bay. He now had his ship cleared in order to find out how many had fallen or were so severely wounded that he did not want them to remain with him. He found that many had fallen and a host of men had been wounded. He now arranged for two ships, fully equipped with able-bodied men, to

move the dead and wounded north to Skagi. Then they gave some thought to how many of Þórð's ships lay behind, and discovered three. Four men had fallen on Þórð's ship but none of them had yet died. Quarter was granted now to Snorri Loftsson and to Án Áskelsson, because the latter gave his name as that of Þórð, his brother. Steinólf Þorbjarnarson was killed outright and thrown overboard, while Klemet smið was also killed out of hand in the forward part of the ship. Án was then led up into the ship which belonged to Einar Jónsson, called lang.

Kolbein's men rested now and ate while they were waiting for a fair wind; they estimated carefully how many men they had lost in the battle and reckoned that about eighty among them had died, including those who died later of their wounds. These were the most distinguished of the men who died: Sökku-Guðmund, Hjalti Helgason, Illugi's sons Einar dragi and Þorstein, Snorri Þórálfsson and Sigurð Rögnvaldsson.

Kolbein now spoke to Einar Jónsson saying that he should take Snorri Loftsson in with him. "You know best," he said, "who everyone is in the West Fjords."

They saw that the battle was now at an end. When Snorri came up on Einar's ship and recognized Án Áskelsson he at once said, "God be praised that I find you alive, Án, my friend!"

When Einar Jónsson heard this he said, "Is this that devil Án—the man who has done us the most harm?"

He had Án seized at once and killed, and then thrown overboard. Snorri thought this deed so terrible that he profoundly wished he had kept silent, or else had lost everything he owned, for he thought himself greatly to blame in this; still, he could not do anything about it now.

Kolbein then ordered them to raise the mast and hoist sail: "I announce to you all now," he said, "that we are going to sail west across Flói and pursue Þórð until we find him; then let us fight it out between us. If we don't meet him, then we will sail to the West Fjords and there make raids, burn homesteads, kill men, and so lay waste the habitations that Þórð will never again be able to muster a force against us. My mind tells me that I will not be lucky enough to cut short Þórð's life, since the

chance has escaped me this time. I have a foreboding that fortune has now shifted to Þórð's side, away from us. Therefore, steer your course from now on so that if you do sight Þórð and his men you can row away."

They sailed away, those first who first were ready, west across Flói.

33

It is now time to take up the story where we left off earlier, when Þórð was resting in the upper valley. The men had fallen fast asleep and when sunset came Þórð had them wakened—cold water was needed for many of the men before they could wake up. Þórð then told two men to go up the fell across Árnes to find out whether they could see anything of Kolbein's expedition. Two men went up on the fell but returned at once: they told Þórð that Kolbein was sailing into Trékillisey. Þórð said this was no time for resting, bade his men arm and himself led the way up to the fell; they came down into Ingólfsfjörð and then went from Ingólfsfjörð to Ófeigsfjörð. The men were by then so exhausted from their wounds, loss of blood, and lack of sleep, that they would go no farther. They lay down and there fell asleep.

On Sunday when Þórð woke up he summoned his men and asked them all together what course they would prefer to adopt. He discovered at once that the bóndis were all eager to go home. Þórð said that he would gladly grant them leave to go home if they came to him the moment Kolbein sailed his ships west along the coast. Most of them were happy to promise this. Most of them now headed up over the fell and then down to Ísafjörð; some went across the upper fells all the way to Barðaströnd; everyone came down to the fjord where he had his homestead. Þórð sent his men to look for small boats, but before the men parted in Ófeigsfjörð, Þórð thanked those who had supported him, saying he would repay them all well if God gave him the opportunity. He then went out to Engines, from there to Drangar and then to Furufjörð. There Þórð posted men out at Stigagnúp to keep watch in case Kolbein sailed along the coast with his

fleet. Þórð went on and reached Holt in Önundarfjörð on the morning of St. Peter's Day.

34

When Kolbein reached Trékyllisvík he landed at Árnes and had the church searched, because he wanted to find out whether there were any men of importance there. But when he found that there were none whom he could in any way help, his men ransacked the church and took whatever they could get.

On Sunday morning Kolbein learned that some wounded men were up on the fells. He sent men up there to look for them and they found Ásgrím Gilsson known as baulufót. He asked for quarter until he could meet Kolbein and they granted him this, then moved him down to Árnes. His kinsmen asked Kolbein to spare his life and let his kinship with Kolbein be of some advantage—for Kolbein had earlier lived with his sister Hallbera syrja. But Kolbein refused to see him and ordered him to be put to death; he appointed a man to kill him.

After that Kolbein had all his ships gathered together; some he took with him but others he had burned. On this expedition he did things which had never before been done in Iceland. He had some whales seized, had fire lit inside some and had them burned, saying that Þórð was not going to feed himself and his men with these long enough to be able to launch an attack. Kolbein pillaged all along Strandir, then sailed from there to the West Fjords, declaring that he would lay waste everything so that Þórð would never be able to raise forces for an attack.

The day following the Feast of St. Peter he sailed in along Ísafjörð. Geirmund, the son of Fanga-Ljót, saw the ships from where he was watching and went straight off to meet Þórð and report to him. Kolbein went with his ships on into Æðey where he stood into harbor. When Geirmund reached Holt, Þórð and all his men were at table; as soon as Geirmund had told his news Þórð bade him come outside; he told him that Kolbein must be just about to arrive, unless he had sailed into Ísafjörð. Men shoved the tables aside and ran for their weapons and

armor while some went to get horses. When the horses came up Þórð sent messengers in every direction to summon help. He sent Hrafn Oddsson west to Rauðasand and Barðaströnd and sent other men all around the West Fjords. Ingjald Geirmundarson he sent to meet with Sturla Þórðarson, Þorleif Þórðarson, and Böðvar Þórðarson to ask them all to come to meet him in Breiðafjörð; Eyjólf Eyjólfsson he sent to Ísafjörð to gather men there. Þórð himself was to raise troops from all round Önundarfjörð, and they were all to meet together Saturday evening out along Dýrafjörð.

When Kolbein reached Æðey he found Þórdís Snorri's daughter and Einar Þorvaldsson there; they sent word to all the more prominent bóndis from north of Ísafjörð and to all those who wanted to keep life and property in peace, to say that they were all to come to meet with Kolbein and swear allegiance to him. Many then transferred their allegiance from Þórð and went to meet Kolbein. But some stayed out on the fells with their livestock; therefore their homesteads were all laid waste. North of Dýrafjörð Þórð could not gather men and gave up trying to raise a force. He now went out to Eyr; Hrafn and Gísli came from the west to Arnarfjörð with ninety men and met Þórð there. But he thought they had not sufficient men for an attack, even if Kolbein sailed west along the fjord. He let the weaker troops return home then but had four ten-oared boats seized and moved to Breiðafjörð. He then stayed with the ships, with sixty men altogether, and went south across Breiðafjörð to Fagrey. There he met his kinsman Sturla and learned that Gizur Þorvaldsson had reached Breiðafjörð with a large company. He had been reconciled with Jón Sturluson then, and their affair had been settled entirely by the king's decision.

When Þórð learned that Gizur had arrived, his sons Sturla and Böðvar gathered a force from the men of Borgarfjörð, from out on Snæfellsnes, out about Skógarströnd and around Gilsfjörð. And when Gizur learned that Þórð had come from the west and had gathered a force, he rode back south.

That summer Tosti Dagfinnsson had both feet struck off. A man named Ingólf Óláfsson was the one who struck him this blow.

Kolbein sailed from the west when he felt he was ready to do so; he now stayed home in Flugumýr at peace. Þórð went back to the West Fjords and spent the summer at Eyr. Things were now quiet for a while.

35

Þórð came down from the west between the two Feasts of the Virgin Mary with a large company. Then he and Sturla rode south in the Dales and called up troops. They got a hundred men or so and rode north over Haukadalsskarð, intending to attack Kolbein in Skagafjörð. They rode to Miðfjörð and north from there until they reached Miðhóp, where they discovered that news of their arrival had gone out to Þingeyr where Óláf chaim and another of Kolbein's men were living. There was a man named Harri then living at Miðhóp; he had now ridden away, and had a very fine horse. Þórð and his group rode north to Hólavað; they saw here that some of the folk had run off to the fells from the northern homesteads while others had taken the northern routes. The company then decided it would be unwise to ride farther, and decided that Sturla should try to talk Þórð into turning back. But Sturla refused because he felt they had blamed him in the summer for the inept attack on Brand Kolbeinsson and his men. They rode on then until they reached Giljá; Þórð now announced that they should turn back: "I see now," he said, "that you want to force this decision on me."

In the evening then they rode to Miðhóp, and the following day west to Hrútafjörð, where they spent the night in the open on Hrútafjarðarháls. That same evening Kolbein arrived in Miðfjörð with three hundred men, and Gísl's sons Kálf and Úlfheðin barely escaped into the church. Later Kolbein sent Kálf west to Þórð to try to effect a reconciliation or a truce; he met Þórð at Staðarhól and a truce was then arranged to last until the Winter Nights.[29] Kolbein continually sought to effect a reconciliation, but he would never give up any land or goðorð or property Sighvat had owned.

While they were in the north two ships were driven back

ashore in the Hvítá: the Eyvind bratt, which had sailed out from Dögurðarnes, and the Höfðabúzan, which had sailed from the Hvítá. Þórð now went to the West Fjords and spent the winter at Eyr but was sometimes in the southern district. That winter Hákon galin was married. In the spring the negotiations began; it was then agreed that both Kolbein and Þórð should go abroad—that King Hákon should arbitrate all the issues in their quarrel, but that Kolbein should hand over to Þórð sixty hundreds of wadmal[30] as provision for the journey. This was done and the goods were taken to the Hvítá.

36

As spring wore on Kolbein's injuries began to grow worse and he was confined to bed; he knew then that he would not be fit for a journey abroad. Gizur was sent for and came north. Kolbein's strength now began to fail and he wanted to transfer all his rights to Gizur and Brand Kolbeinsson. Gizur was not prepared to accept this, but promised to help his kinsman Brand, if he were to govern those districts, with all the support he had or could muster. They agreed on this then and later sent word to Þórð in the west that all the districts north of Öxnadalsheið—that is, all his patrimony—would be handed over. In return he was to grant a truce and agree to a reconciliation. But all the land west of Öxnadalsheið was given to Brand Kolbeinsson as far as Hrútafjörð. He was to give aid to Gizur whenever necessary and each was to support the other. The bóndis in Skagafjörð were most eager to have Brand as their chieftain, if Kolbein died, for he was, in general, popular with everyone. Kolbein also wanted Brand most of all to take his place. Kolbein therefore announced to all men when they came to see him during his illness that Brand was to have the greater part of the goðorðs in Skagafjörð and many of those west of the heath: "Although," he said, "he has allowed me to manage them."[31]

The priest Brand Jónsson, later the Bishop of Hólar, was present at this announcement by Kolbein—he had come north with Gizur and he was a maternal cousin of Brand Kolbeinsson.

Kolbein of Stað was also present and they both urged Brand to take over the districts. A group of Kolbein ungi's followers offered him all their service if he would promise to take over their cases. Brand remained at Flugumýr then but Gizur now rode south.

Kolbein ungi died that summer on the Feast of Mary Magdalene. At the time of his death he was thirty-five years old,[32] like his father Arnór and his father's brother Kolbein Tumason for whom he was named. Kolbein was greatly mourned by his men and by all who knew him, including the people of Skagafjörð. He was carried out to Hólar and buried in front of the church doors next to Kolbein Tumason.

37

After this a meeting was held at Hestaþingshamar which a great many men attended from the district and also from west of the heath. Brand was then chosen leader of all those districts which had been specified; he collected from the districts all the revenues and the sheep-tax[33] which Kolbein had controlled. He kept a large establishment at Stað and a good many men. In the autumn men who had been followers of Kolbein ungi came to Brand: Gegnir Illugason, Hámund Þórðarson, Gísli Barkarson, Halldór nef, Óttar snoppulang, Ögmund vandræðamág, Ásgrím Ormsson, Ölvið Einarsson. Ásbjörn Illugason stayed there a long time during the winter as did Broddi Þorleifsson. Arnór Eiríksson, Brand's sister's son, also spent the winter there.

38

It is to be reported about those in the western districts that at this time Hrafn Oddsson wooed Þuríð, the daughter of Sturla Sighvatsson. Þórð strongly supported this and their wedding was at Sauðafel in the summer. That summer Svarthöfði went abroad from the Hvítá with those goods which Kolbein ungi had given to Þórð.

After Hrafn's wedding Þórð went north and it was reported that the men of Eyjafjörð would be coming south to meet him

at Miðfjörð. Þórð rode north with his homemen, about thirty; Sturla had almost twenty men. Þorleif of Garð also went with twenty men; Ketil Þorlákssón, Guðmund from below Fell, and many bóndis had come at Þórð's command, and altogether they were more than eighty men. When they reached Miðfjörð the men of Eyjafjörð were already there with eighty men. They now all rode north together and Þórð came into Eyjafjörð on St. Lawrence's Day.[34] The same day a ship came into harbor from the sea and Gunnar bratt was on board. The death of Órækja Snorrason was then reported; he had died during the summer on the Feast of John the Baptist.

Þórð now went to the ship and brought a good supply of beer which he had taken in to Grund. They made ready now for a celebration of the Feast of the Virgin Mary.[35] The preceding Sunday he had held a meeting at Kristnes with all the men of the district; they swore oaths to him and gave up those properties which they had managed but Sighvat had owned. Þórð held a splendid feast on the Virgin Mary's Day and gave generous presents to those who had accompanied him north. He now stayed on with his followers while the others rode to the west; and there were many who were not well-disposed to this. Most of Kolbein's followers—Einar lang, Gegnir Illugason, and many others—stayed with Helgi at Flugumýr and made no end of gibes.

39

Brand maintained a homestead at Stað in Skagafjörð as was reported earlier. He was a popular man, had many followers with him, kept a splendid household and displayed considerable hospitality in his establishment. He was an extremely generous man and enjoyed a good reputation as a consequence. So Ingjald Geirmundarson said in the *flokkr* which he composed about Brand Kolbeinsson:

7. Great was the fame
This noble man won,
Generous with gold,
Magnanimous Brand.

Little he cared
About hoarding his wealth,
But gold he gave freely
To all of his friends.

8. Steadfast, this warrior
Was steadfast in giving:
Great was his wealth,
Ever generous his hand.
His fame is far-reaching
—Well-beloved this leader—
Such glory so won
Will not lessen with time.

Those who had been Kolbein ungi's followers but were now Brand's could not be trusted not to utter taunts in mocking verses which were not at all to Þórð's liking, and this came to Þórð's attention. When Brand learned of their gibes he told them to put an end to them at once and not keep on with such spitefulness; he said great harm might well come of this, and certainly no good. Rumors now spread widely throughout the district. Þórð said little about this, nevertheless he was troubled both by their spitefulness and the many circumstances in which he thought they showed their hostility.

There were many valiant men in Skagafjörð at that time, but those most helpful in counsel to Brand were Kolbein's kinsman Broddi Þorleifsson, Ásbjörn Illugason, Einar lang, Óláf chaim—he was living then at Miklabær in Blönduhlíð—and many others who had been Kolbein's friends. Þórð had many followers with him also.

In the winter, after Christmas, unmistakable hostility began to reveal itself throughout the district but from then until Easter men managed to avoid outright quarreling. The truce was valid among all men until after the Alþing, and during the truce it had been agreed that twelve men should pronounce judgment in all cases—those men who were thought best fitted for this in all Iceland.

A comet was often seen during this winter.[36]

Þórð's men were constantly traveling to the west on their missions during the winter, and he sent word to those of his friends who he wished would come north to meet him. Teit Styrmisson came north between Christmas and Lent; he had a homestead in Flatey and in the autumn had married Sigríð Hálfdan's daughter. Hrafn Oddsson and his kinsman Eyjólf came from the west during Lent. Þórarin Tómasson and Hákon galin also came at that time from Sturla; Þórarin was then Þórð's homeman. Björn drumb also came north now with Pál kappgnóg. In the spring, at Easter, Þórð sent Nikulás Oddsson and Álmar Þorkelsson north to Öxarfjörð to raise troops and ordered the force to come south in Easter Week.

40

Early in Lent Brand sent his men Gegnir Illugason and Hámund Þórðarson south to Gizur with a letter which said:

"Brand of Stað sends God's greetings and full-hearted friendship to Gizur Þorvaldsson.

"My attitude toward the agreement with you, kinsman, is just the same as when we talked last summer, because the need for us to support each other as strongly as possible has not diminished. There is peace, so to speak, in Þórð's pastures, until Lent. There have been attempts to reach an agreement on both sides about our property in the district of Skagafjörð, and threats to consider it a breach of the truce if they were not accepted. Furthermore, Þórð's men have tried very hard to win his friends away from us by making whatever claims they best could. There have also been further attempts than that made earlier to effect a reconciliation with us. Þórð's opinion is that there can be no just reconciliation unless he has all the North Quarter under his control. He also intends to control all of Borgarfjörð and claims that Þorleif of Garð is his loyal friend.

"Now, kinsman, see if you can subject these men to some reliable test. We wish you to take over according to the king's command all control of Borgarfjörð, for this seems to us a very

good move to support. We know for certain that Þórð sent a letter to Bishop Sigvarð asking to be allowed, along with other men, to attend church services and asking the bishop in addition to keep you out of these affairs among us men of Skagafjörð; and we know that the bishop promised this. We know too that the bishop sent a letter to Steinmóð the priest to bring Þórð into the church, and he did so.

"We will have absolute trust in most of the inhabitants of this district if you show that you support us. We find it somewhat difficult to procure the proper arbitrators for a case so troublesome and so risky to take on; now, considering all these circumstances, we wish you would ride north to meet with us as soon as you are sufficiently prepared to do so, for men will not place their trust in any agreement unless you come soon. On the other hand we cannot on any account come to meet you, because of the danger which threatens this district."

Gegnir and Hámund came north to Brand from Gizur during Easter Week; they said that Gizur was about to come north.

41

It is reported that on the fourth day of Easter, Þórð held a meeting at Grund with all the bóndis of the district except Hall of Möðruvellir, for Hall was then a homeman south at Bær. Þórð made it known that he intended to move west to Skagafjörð with as large a force as he could collect in order to avenge himself for his injuries, as he called them, on the men of Skagafjörð. Klypp Ketilsson was first to reply to Þórð's pronouncement,

"It is a good idea," he said, "for us to move toward Skagafjörð now. We won't be chased away any faster than the last time we went there with troops."[37]

No one there opposed Þórð, and his followers even strongly urged him on, many expressing themselves forcefully. The Sunday following Easter Week Þórð departed from home and headed for Hörgárdal; on Tuesday he went west across Öxnadalsheið. Þórð's followers rode ahead with Eyjólf Þorsteinsson at their head. Ingjald then spoke this verse:

9. Keen swordsman and fighter,
Sets out for Skagafjörð
Hoping harsh battle—
Brave men—will meet him.
Against scurrilous libel
The hard-boiled Þórð
—Troops rushing to join him—
Will wreak full revenge.

The whole troop went to Silfrastaðir in the evening. Þórð had almost five hundred men from the north. During Easter Week Brand learned that Þórð was mustering forces and he then assembled a troop from all around his district, from west of Vatnsskarð and also from Fljót. This Skáld-Hall[38] said in the *drápa*[39] which he composed about Brand Kolbeinsson:

10. Brand swiftly summons
Throughout every homestead—
Bóndis ride in to help him—
Forces bold in fighters.
His friends west of Vatnsskarð,
From Fljót and yet farther,
—Scarce able to wait—
Men pour in, I find, to help him.

We must now report that Þórð and his men spent the night outdoors, down in the valley, there at Silfrastaðir; when most of the troop had been asleep for a little while a wind came up against them and whistled along the spears. Some of the men were awakened by the whistling, thought an attack had been made, and leapt up for their weapons. They began to fight among themselves; some of them ran up on the building there and defended themselves from that position while others made a vigorous attack. They fought long and furiously before they recognized each other. On Wednesday Þórð rode down into Vallaholt. One man, named Eirík, had died and many of them were wounded.

Brand was now at Víðimýr with six hundred men. These men now negotiated between the partners: Ísar Pálsson the priest,

Vermund Halldórsson who was later abbot at Þingeyr, and some other priests. A truce was arranged for mediation. The Skagafirðings offered Gizur's judgment on whatever Þórð determined, but Þórð would accept nothing other than self-judgment.[40] They cried out against this and no reconciliation was effected.

Björn Starrason was the name of a priest who rode out to raise troops in Laxárdal and Reykjaströnd. Wednesday night he was at Sauðá and it was the next Thursday that they fought against themselves. The moment he fell aslcep in the evening he dreamt that a man came to him, bcnt over his bed and spoke these words:

"*Domine Jesu Christe, accipe spiritum meum.*"

The priest woke up and went outside, then came back indoors, went to bed and fell asleep; the same thing happened to him a second and thcn a third time. He thought he recognized this man distinctly, both by the fashion of his hair and his appearance, and that he was Brand Kolbeinsson.

While the Skagafirðings were at Víðimýr a disease struck their troops in such a way that nearly thirty men fell unconscious and were in critical condition. Brand's brother Pál was among them.

42

On Wednesday evening, Þórð rode to Úlfsstaðir with all his troop. The Skagafirðings spent the night at Víðimýr but moved early on Thursday morning north from there over Jökulsá and took up a position south of Djúpadalsá on a landslide-hill; there they drew up their troops and had well on towards seven hundred men. Eystein hvíti the Norwegian drew up Brand's forces, and there they awaited Þórð and his men.

Þórð had nearly five hundred men and it was a very well equipped force. The Skagafirðings' force turned to face west, assuming Þórð would attack from that direction. But Þórð and his men rode down along the dcclivity so that when they leapt from their horses and formed ranks together they stood right at the edge of the Skagafirðings' flank. Brand and his men turned to face them but their men fell away; there were ancient turf-graves between them, but Þórð and his men managed to get

over these. Þórð was both in the center of his host and yet at its head; on the northern flank were the men from Svarfaðardal and from the north; on the southern flank the men of Eyjafjörð, and both proceeded rather slowly across the graves. Brand and his followers were then in front of them. Þórð attacked the moment they met: first they attacked by hurling stones, then by thrusting at them with spears, and the troops of the Skagafirðings gave way as fast as if a wedge had been driven into them. Haugsnes was the name given to the place above which the battle on the plain took place.

Thus Skáld-Hall recited:

11. Quickly men learned of this battle,
Of lives lost at Haugsnes,
Reports ran like fires
Of shields bright with blood
Of brave men, all our folk,
Hard-hitting, undaunted.
With courage and valor
Friend fought against foe.

12. Spears ravaged in strife
—This prince among warriors
Shoots forth his good spear—
Shield shattered by sword
And the spear driven deep
In the breast of the foe
Gives the raven his fill—
His beak dips in their blood.

Hall also mentions that Brand was foremost among the troops at the beginning of the battle, but that Jón Skíðason, called kórkjappi, a big, strong man, then rode ahead of Brand.

Hall put it this way:

13. Forward where spears hang
The noble Þórð strode
First among his faithful troops
—Þórð the great warrior—
Blood-bright the spears struck,

Swords rang against shields,
Kinsmen all, as I know,
Where the strife was most savage.

When Jón Skíðason dashed ahead of Brand, he hurled a spear at Þórð with both hands and Þórð fell to the ground. At this the Skagafirðings let out a shout, and Þorstein Gunnarsson leapt forward across him. Many blows were then exchanged at the same time, with sword and spear, and the battle became so furious that none like it has ever occurred in Iceland either in numbers of men or loss of life. Þórð got to his feet the moment he had fallen, saying there was nothing the matter with him. Gegnir Illugason pressed boldly forward and struck Hákon galin in the eye; the stroke came out through the nape of his neck, and was fatal. There was then great loss of life on both sides. There was a man named Einar auðmað who lived in Vík out from Stað; he was married to Þórð's kinswoman Ingibjörg, Bergþór's daughter. He was determined to flee ahead of everyone—and he succeeded. He was followed by his son Brand and many another in their wake. Þórð and his men drove hard against them when they saw their troops were falling away, and then again there was much loss of life on both sides. Haf Bjarnarson, Brand Atlason, and many others, including men of Fljót and Sléttlíð, got through to the northern flank of Þórð's ranks, where they attacked boldly, killing nearly twenty men of the north who fell one on top of the other. But as for the men from that district and from west of the heath, they broke into flight—this added up to a good many men. If they had stood firm, and had done nothing more, the men of Skagafjörð would have had every chance to defeat the men of the north. But this was not their lot. Þórarin Tómassson got a horse and pursued the flying host. Þorbjörn Snorrason the Selunder rode off with others of the fleeing men, but he heard from behind a summons to fight on more valiantly and be helpful. Þorbjörn turned back straightway and saw two men attacking Svein eldboðung, one of them on a horse. Þorbjörn at once struck at the one who was on horseback and drove his spear right through him; this was a mortal blow.

The man was Þórarin Tómassson. The other man who attacked Svein was also slain. Ari Finnsson, who lived in Bjarnarstaðahlíð, had no mind to flee but leaned on his axe there singing an *Ave Maria*—this was the last thing men heard from him: Álmar Þorkelsson struck him his death blow. Broddi Þorleifsson, Ásbjörn Illugason, Einar lang, Gegnir Illugason, Jón kjappi, Karf-Helgi's three sons Kollsvein, Þorvald, and Bergþór, all pressed forward courageously with a strong company. They went so far beyond Brand that he was out of any danger as long as they remained unscathed and not separated from one another. Þórð and his homemen, with many other comrades, came forward against them. Again, there was the most furious fighting. Gegnir was separated from his companions; three or four men attacked him but he defended himself splendidly. He was by then extremely tired, for he wore a heavy byrnie, and he fell before them; they flayed his byrnie from him and so killed him. There was a man named Hjalti, known as járnauga; he was a powerful man and his fair hair fell over his shoulders down below his steel hat. The men from the north thought he was Pál Kolbeinsson and three men attacked him; but he said no insignificant man or beggar would give them a better fight than he would. They fought with him for a long time before he fell. He suffered about thirty wounds and displayed great valor when he lost his life. Jón Skíðason acted as if he saw no one but Þórð, and attacked him furiously. Therefore, when this was talked about later on, Þórð said that if there had been three such champions he would never again have seen the sun go down.

Those who stood with Brand now gave battle furiously, as Hall reports in his *drápa* about Brand:

14. Fiercely I hear
Men fought that day
—Brave men on both sides—
Swords bit on shields.
Every other man
Was to fall on that field,
In that bitterest of battle
When kinsmen attacked.

15. Bóndis fell on that field
—Lives lost at swords' point—
Their weapons rang out
With the war-song of battle.
Slain men scattered far
On Haugsnes' wide plain—
The raven, sated with food,
Still screamed among men.

When a long time had passed in such fighting Brand's company fell apart and suffered many losses. Hrani Koðránsson hurled a great stone at Jón Skíðason; it struck him in the chest and broke through his rib cage, a mortal blow. Jón defended himself for only a short time thereafter, even though he had almost no other wounds; he showed great courage and the valor of a noble warrior, when he met his death there.

Brand found a horse for himself but as he fled he was captured between the southern and middle homestead at Grund. Kolbein grön seized him and brought him up the grassy field where the cross now stands. Kolbein found Þórð and reported that Brand had been captured.

Þórð said, "Why don't you kill him?"

Þórð now sat down in the field; the battle was then almost at an end, and Kolbein said, "I don't know why, unless you yourself want to go out there?"

Þórð stood up but Hrafn Oddsson said, "Don't go out there, Þórð, if Brand is not to be given quarter."

Þórð then appointed Sigurð Glúmsson to kill Brand. Kolbein grön with many other men went up to where Brand stood captive; Sigurð struck at Brand with his axe but Brand shot his buckler over his head. Kolbein tore the buckler from him and Sigurð now struck Brand across the head, splitting it right down to the ears. There Brand died. About thirty men were present when Brand lost his life. A cross was erected on the ground where Brand died and thereafter the place was named Róða-Grund.[41]

Eyjólf Þorsteinsson had his kinsman Einar lang captured but

gave him quarter; he had fought valiantly. More men were now captured but were granted quarter by their various kinsmen or friends; still everyone fled who was able. Many men on both sides fell and many were wounded. The greatest bóndis of Eyjafjörð fell there: Klypp Ketilsson, Þorgils Hólasvein, Guðmund Gíslsson, Magnús Narfason, Vigfús Þorgilsson; on Þórð's side nearly forty men died. Of the Skagafirðings there died Brand Kolbeinsson, Jón Hafliðason, Kleppjárn Hallsson, Óláf chaim, and Illugi from Svínavatn; on Brand's side almost seventy men fell.

So Ingjald reports, in respect of how many died, in the *flokkrs* which he composed about Brand and recited:

16. This furious battle
Turned in favor of the men,
The brave men of Skagafjörð
Who died on this field.
In the clash of their shields
One hundred were slain—
Nor will the sad toll
I have learned grow less.

17. The harsh hand of fate,
As so often, has shaped
The lives of these men and their leader
—Famous, valiant,
Yet he fell in this battle—
For none is so mighty
He can carve his own doom.

18. Almighty, all-powerful,
King of all heavens,
Protect the good soul
Of Brand, brave champion.
May the King all-wise,
Who frees men from torment,
Peace enduring and true
Give now to Brand's soul.

After the battle, Þórð rode up to Flugumýr; he proclaimed that all men who wanted to be reconciled with him were to be given quarter in order to meet him. Many men sought him out, those who had taken part in the battle and many others too. They all granted him self-judgment and swore oaths of allegiance to him. He took over entire control of the district and with that went home to the north. He remained at peace now for some time.

43

Brand's body was carried to Stað and there buried south of the church, beside the choir in front of the entrance-doors. He was deeply mourned by his men.

Ingjald says in his *Brandsflokkr:*

19. So generous a champion
Should have lived longer,
But Fate dealt his sons
This heavy sorrow.
The loss of their gold-giver
Can scarcely be borne
By men of nobility
Who knew his great bounty.

44

This news now flew swiftly throughout the land and seemed noteworthy, as it was. As soon as Gizur heard it he mustered troops and went north. He had nearly four hundred men. He reached Skagafjörð and stayed there, with fourteen other men, with Jórun Kálf's daughter at Stað; he promised his loyal support and friendship to her and to her sons by Brand. Jórun gave him fine gifts. The Skagafirðings now came to meet Gizur and swore loyalty to him. Spies went to Þórð and he at once called up his men again and collected a large force. But his men were utterly played out and not so eager to fight as in the spring before the battle.

Negotiations were now begun and Þórir tott Arnþórsson—he had a ship at Eyr and was with Gizur—and many men mediated

between them; they reached an agreement that King Hákon was to arbitrate between them with the men whom he wanted to join with him. Both Gizur and Þórð were to go abroad during that summer. Twelve men from each side swore to keep this agreement and to uphold this peace, but Gizur and Þórð themselves did not meet each other. Gizur went south now after this agreement.

45

Þórð made ready for his journey abroad; he put his estates into the care of his kinsman Hálfdan, who was to stay at Grund with Steinvör and their children. Þórð's followers Kolbein grön and Álmar Þorkelsson were to stay there also. Þórð gave Þuríð Sturla's daughter[42] in marriage to Eyjólf Þorsteinsson and they too were to spend the winter at Grund.

Nikulás Oddsson, Þorstein Gunnarsson, and Ingjald Geirmundarson went abroad with Þórð; they sailed from Eyjafjörð but Gizur sailed abroad from Eyr; with Gizur were Önund the bishop's kinsman, Guðmund Þórhildarson, and Þorleif hreim. Both of them reached Norway in the autumn and met King Hákon in Bergen. And both went north with the king to Trondheim because he spent the winter there.

King Hákon summoned a court to hear the case of Þórð and Gizur. At this meeting Þórð had read aloud a log scroll which he had had written about the quarrels between the men of Haukadal and the Sturlungs. This recounted the great loss which Þórð had suffered in the death of his men.

The king then said, "What are you going to recite in reply, Gizur?"

He said, "I have not written out my story but even so I can offer some things in reply. However, I consider that what has been presented here about our differences is perfectly fair."

They both won a reputation here, for people said they had never heard a fairer presentation than each made in his case, the more so as they had often been in opposition to each other. Neither contradicted the other or denied his statements. Still, people thought they understood that the king would favor Gizur in every way he thought he could; and men believed that the

reason for this was primarily the affair of Snorri Sturluson, whose death was partly the king's doing. Gizur and Þórð now submitted their whole case to the king's judgment but the king would not yet let final judgment be given, so he did not pronounce a decision in the case that winter. But in the spring the king went south to Bergen with both Gizur and Þórð, who were accompanied by their men. Again their case was discussed when they reached the south. When Þórð brought forward the accusation about Snorri Sturluson the king answered for this, saying that he was the one to atone for it; then he bade Gizur answer for the other issues. People thought that King Hákon would support Gizur at every opportunity that seemed fitting for him to plead his case.

They both now stayed with the king.

46

Now we must take up events in Iceland. During the summer following the battle at Haugsnes and the fall of Brand there was peace in Iceland.

Kolbein of Stað had the management of Hólar but he was not very well the summer after the battle. He enjoyed neither sleep nor food and thought a great deal abut the death of his son Brand. Somewhat before the Feast of St. Óláf he came to Stað to see Jórun; he put up at Stað but did not get to talk with either Jórun or his other close friends. From there he rode to Víðimýr to his daughter Ingigerð. But there he took to his bed as soon as he arrived and he died on the Latter Feast of St. Óláf; it seemed to those who best understood that the death of his son had most to do with his own death. He was carried to Stað and buried south of the church near his son Brand.

Kolbein was then nearly seventy when he died; Brand had been thirty-five when he fell, a year younger than Kolbein ungi. The day of death for Brand and those men who died on the same day was four nights before the Feast of Jón, Bishop of Hólar. This was in the sixth winter of the tenth decade in the duodecimal hundredth year since the death of St. Óláf the King, but short two years of the hundredth year since the burning at Hítardal,[43]

whieh was the seeond most important event ever to have oeeurred in this eountry. When Brand died, Innoeent was the Pope in Rome; Frederik was the Emperor; Eirík Eiríksson was the King in Sweden; Eirík and Abel, in Denmark; Hákon, King in Norway; and Henry, King in England.

47

The year following the battle of Haugsnes, Cardinal Vilhjálm eame up to the northern lands and to Bergen; he was sent by Pope Innoeent to conseerate King Hákon at his eoronation. He also consecrated the Church of the Apostles in the royal enclosure on the Feast of St. Swithin in thc summer. At that time King Hákon had Gizur and Þórð present their charges while the cardinal was prcsent, and had men explain the statc of their whole ease. When the eardinal heard all this and realized the loss of men that Þórð had suffered in his quarrels with Gizur, he showed him the deepest consideration and thought he had invariably had the worst of everything. He would hear of only one thing, that Þórð should rcturn to Ieeland while Gizur should stay behind in Norway; he further gave it as his opinion that only one man should rule in Ieeland if there was to be peaec.

At that time also Bishop Heinrck was consecrated to the episeopal see at Hólar in Iecland, and he vigorously supported Þórð's side against the eardinal and also against the king. Relations werc then very friendly betwcen thc bishop and Þórð. In the summer, at the Feast of St. Óláf, Hákon was erowned king and at that time held a great feast out in a ship's shed.[44] It was then deeided that Þórð should return to Iceland and he was therewith appointed governor of the whole country. But Gizur remained in Norway and found this hard to bear; he was then given thc district north of Trondheim to govern. Þórð's kinsman Þorgils remained with the king in Norway as a kind of hostage for Þórð's loyalty to the king.

48

The summer Þórð returned to Ieeland was two winters after Kolbein ungi died and Svarthöfði Dufgusson went abroad from

the Hvítá with those goods which Kolbein had laid out for Þórð's journey abroad. Svarthöfði was in Norway the winter that Þórð was at Grund; and the summer Þórð went abroad Svarthöfði came back, landing in the Vestmannaeyjar.

The summer King Hákon was crowned, Bishop Heinrek and Þórð went to Iceland. Þórð landed in the Vestmannaeyjar and there took on a large supply of wine which he owned and which Svarthöfði had brought to Iceland for him and left behind there in the islands. Þórð now traveled up to Keldur where he met with his kinsmen Hálfdan and Steinvör. They had both come down from Eyjafjörð and had no great opinion of Þórð's followers. Þórð then rode north to Grund in Eyjafjörð and stayed there for some time before going on to the west. When he came into Borgarfjörð he took under his control the whole area and all the property of Snorri Sturluson as well as the district of Borgarfjörð. He went on to Garðar to Þorleif, had him swear an oath of allegiance, and then appointed him governor of that district. He then sent men to Bersastaðir to take over the establishment in his name, and got a good deal of grain from there; then he moved up to Reykjaholt, intending to stay there until midwinter. He went west to Saurbær and was with Sturla at Staðarhól at the beginning of Christmas; he and Sturla then both went back south to Reykjaholt where they stayed until nearly Easter.

Einar Þorvaldsson and Hrafn Oddsson arrived from the west, and all the men of the West Fjords promised obedience to Þórð.

That winter Nikulás Oddsson was married at Reykjaholt. Bishop Sigvarð came south at that time, and although Þórð and his men were not at first much in harmony with him nevertheless they managed amicably. To the episcopal see at Skálaholt Þórð gave the establishment at Skógtjörn in Álftanes for the souls of his father and his mother. She had died in the autumn before he came south. Þórð now rode north at about Easter time and took over control of all the North Quarter. Not one man spoke in protest against this. He offered no compensation for his kinsman Brand and no one demanded compensation. Brand's sons were then young, one eight years old and the other nine years old.

In the spring Þórð established another homestead at Geldinga-

holt in Skagafjörð and lived there for a long time. Kolfinna Þorstein's daughter managed the household there; she was Þórð's mistress and they had a daughter named Halldóra. Þórð had two sons by Yngvild Úlf's daughter, Þórð and Úlf. Styrmir was the name of his son by Nereið Styrmir's daughter. Jón kárin was his eldest son; he had been born in the West Fjords. That summer Þórð rode to the Þing with a great host of men, most of them among the more prominent men at the Þing, and they all showed deference to Þórð except for the men from the south, who were Gizur's men, and even some of the men from Áverjar, those who refused to follow Hálfdan's counsel.

In the East Fjords at that time lived the two young kinsmen, Þórarin Jónsson's sons Þorvarð and Odd; they had their father's inheritance and they made over all their cases to Þórð and his management. Sæmund Ormsson owned Síða and his father's inheritance; his brother Guðmund was then young so Sæmund managed everything for them. He was a clever man, rather ambitious and considered likely to become a great chieftain. He was living at Kálfafel. He sought a very close friendship with Þórð and wanted his counsel; he also asked to become one of Þórð's homemen.

Þórð alone ruled all cases at the Þing and he accepted as Lawspeaker Óláf Þórðarson known as hvítaskáld. Þórð caused trouble for the southerners, claiming that he could see now what sort of compensation for a father they would grant him, since they were more reluctant to serve him than to serve other men in Iceland; but they paid no heed to this. He assured them that they would not be any better off if they persevered in such arrogance. Þórð now rode north from the Þing and stayed at his home for the summer.

In the autumn when news of ships was certain, and men were sure that Gizur was not returning, Þórð rode south over Kjöl with a large force of men and went all around Gizur's territory. Most men said nothing against serving him, but there was the greatest pressure upon them. He also demanded fines from all the bóndis and they found it easier to pay these than to give open allegiance to Þórð, for they were single-minded in their

service to Gizur. Þórð then went right down to the headland and so up into Borgarfjörð. Sæmund Ormsson then joined him. Þórð went from Borgarfjörð west to the Dales and divided the district with his kinsmen Sturla Þórðarson and Jón Sturluson. He did this at Þorbergsstaðir. He then rode north to Laxárdalsheið and spent the winter at Grund. That winter he gave Ingun, Sturla's daughter, in marriage to Sæmund Ormsson and they went to the East Fjords during the summer to the homestead which Sæmund owned there. Sæmund then became a rather overbearing man, yet one considered likely to become a chieftain.

Þórð now rode to the Þing that summer and no men at the Þing spoke against him. The men of the south paid the fines Þórð had demanded of them, but still only under the greatest pressure. There were some disagreements that summer between Sæmund Ormsson and Ögmund Helgason. They referred their complaints to Þórð and he smoothed out the difficulties between them which they had contested; still, no one spoke against anything Þórð wished to do.

That summer a letter from King Hákon came to Iceland for Þórð, and he was ordered to go to Norway. It contained also some complaints and reproaches against Þórð, claiming that he had endeavored to make the country subject to him rather than to the king, according to his understanding of their agreement. Bishop Heinrek also agreed that Þórð had not kept to what he had promised the king. Many disputes now arose between Þórð and Bishop Heinrek until there was scarcely one thing on which they were agreed. This quarrel grew to such proportions that Bishop Heinrek resolved to go abroad that summer and see King Hákon. The latter received the bishop warmly, for he knew that he had genuinely supported his cause in Iceland. The bishop had not much to say in Þórð's defense in this matter, but declared Þórð had not fulfilled what he had promised, and that the king's cause would never make any progress in Iceland while Þórð was so powerful. The bishop spent the winter with the king and the king lent a willing ear to all his statements; there were, however, few men in Norway who promoted Þórð's cause except for some of his closest supporters.

The Saga of the Men of Svínafel

The Saga of the Men of Svínafel

When King Hákon Hákonarson had ruled Norway for thirty years Cardinal Vilhjálm came to Norway and consecrated Hákon king with a crown. That was in the fifth year of Innocent's papacy. Three years later Bishop Heinrek Kársson and Þorð kakali went to Norway.[1] Sturla Þorðarson was then chosen Lawspeaker.[2] In that year Árni óreiða, the son of Magnús Ámundason, died.

The priest Brand Jónsson was consecrated abbot in the same year as Hákon's coronation. He governed Þykkvabær in Ver, in the east; he was a splendid chieftain and a good clergyman, sensible and popular, powerful and benevolent. At that time he enjoyed the greatest good fortune of all men who then lived in Iceland. His mother was Halldóra Arnór's daughter and Halldóra's mother was Guðrún, the daughter of Bishop Brand Sæmundarson.

2

Orm Jónsson then governed the homestead named Svínafel. He was a goðorð-man[3] of Síða, was married to Álfheið Njál's daughter from Skógar and their sons were Sæmund and Guðmund. Orm's brothers were Brand, who later became Bishop of Hólar, and Þórarin, the father of Þorvarð and Odd. Their sisters were Steinun and Solveig—thus there were five brothers and sisters.

At that time Dig-Helgi lived at Kirkjubær. He was married to Arnfríð, the daughter of the bóndi Þorstein from Hof; their sons were Ögmund, Þorstein, Arnór who later was abbot at Viðey, Sokki, and Finnbjörn. Ögmund Helgason was married to Steinun Jón's daughter and these were their children: Guð-

mund grís, Jón karl, Sigmund and Sokki, Arnbjörg the nun, Guðrún, Þóra, and Helga.

Skeggi Njálsson lived then at Skógar; he was married to Solveig Jón's daughter and these were their children: Klæng, Þorstein, Eyjólf, Jón the priest, and Arnbjörg; she married Guðmund Þorsteinsson, a good bóndi, who lived in East Skarð, in Rangárvellir. Helgi Loftsson was then living at Skál; he was married to Ásbjörg Þorlák's daughter and Bishop Árni's sister. She and Helgi had many children: Loft and the priest Bjarni; Magnús and Árni who later was bishop; Guðný who married Þórð of Möðruvellir; Þórdís[4] and Halldóra. Helgi of Skál had a brother named Svart, a good bóndi, married to Ástríð Guðmund's daughter. They had a son named Þorkel.

Snorri sveim lived at Holt in Meðalland. He was a very wealthy man though an insignificant bóndi. He was a friend of Ögmund. He had no children. There was a man named Egil and known as skyrhnakk who lived at Mörtunga. He was married to a woman named Ragnheið and Einar was the name of their son. These men were all good friends.

3

One summer when Orm Jónsson was at the Alþing he was afflicted by pains in his arm; he sent for Helgi, the doctor, who lived at Másstaðir in Vatnsdal. When Helgi came, he said it looked to him like the sort of sickness for which nothing could be done, and this proved to be true. Some people say that at that Þing Ögmund Helgason bled Orm from an artery and after that the sickness overcame him. Though very ill, Orm rode from the Þing to Skálaholt where he took to his bed and lay there long into the summer in his weakness. Then his wife Álfheið came from the east with many of his friends and kinsmen to see him; he was the most popular of all the secular chieftains in Iceland in those days because, while he avoided as much as he could all the raids and unfortunate ventures in which most men got entangled, nevertheless he always stood up firmly before all men for his own rights. The bóndi Orm died at Skálaholt three nights before the Latter Feast of the Virgin Mary and was

buried east of the church. His wife Álfheið was then pregnant and gave birth within the year to a boy who was named Orm after his father.

Snorri fróði was slain at Reykjaholt that autumn. Sæmund took over the church property and goðorð after his father while other property was intended for Guðmund. He stayed for a long time with Ögmund and Steinun, his father's sister. Sæmund took over Guðmund's share of church property, while Ögmund kept the rest of Guðmund's holdings. Guðmund was seven years old when his father died. It quickly became apparent after Orm died that Ögmund was pushing himself forward into the management of the district, and many quarrels developed between him and Sæmund.

4

One time Sæmund charged that he had been forced to take on a dependent of Ögmund's named Höskuld. Ögmund rode over at once to investigate the man's resources and then claimed that Höskuld could indeed not provide for himself in any other way, because he was very poor. He sent men to bring the dependent back. Sæmund was extremely angry about this, looked over Höskuld's means, and decided that he did have enough to support himself. He asserted that Ögmund had acted unfairly toward him and said that he should not have to put up with this. After that he rode home and things were quiet for the winter.

The following spring Sæmund went to Kirkjubær on a summons-journey; he brought summons against Ögmund on the ground that he had denied him his rights. Ögmund and Sæmund's brother Guðmund heard the summons. Sæmund now rode down to Holt in Meðalland where he confiscated so much from the homestead of Snorri sveim that there was little of value left behind. From there he rode to Mörtunga where he divided this wealth with Egil and Ragnheið. After this he rode away; he took with him all the wealth Egil owned but told Egil skyrhnakk that he would provide him with a free residence at Svínafel whenever he wanted. Egil didn't say much either way.

As soon as Sæmund had gone away Egil rode to Kirkjubær and told Ögmund what had happened. Ögmund did nothing about this but asked Egil to stay with him. Egil thanked him for the offer and said he would rather stay there than with Sæmund. While they were talking about this Snorri sveim rode in; he recounted his difficulties and reported what he had been subjected to. Ögmund told them to take heart, saying there was no shortage of food or of anything else at Kirkjubær. "And," he added, "it will last for as long as we live."

Ögmund then sent a man to Abbot Brand in Þykkvabær to tell him about Sæmund's activities. The abbot promised to arrange mediation for them but told Ögmund not to lend support to his friends, out of stubbornness, in any unjust actions: "Because one thing we can expect: Sæmund won't tolerate that, from you or from any other man."

On the other hand the abbot did not like the confiscation of property even though there were some grounds for it; he said he feared this would lead to even more quarrels between them than before, because Sæmund was a very domineering and unruly man, one who made no distinction between men, while Ögmund was unyielding and very influential.

5

Sæmund now rode to the Þing with a great many men. Abbot Brand also rode to the Þing, his brother's son Guðmund with him. At the Þing Sæmund meant to have Ögmund sentenced to outlawry.[5] But the abbot told them to drop the charge and Guðmund asked them to spare his foster father Ögmund. Sæmund complied and thus brought no further action at this time. The abbot and his companions rode home from the Þing and it seemed to them that as always Abbot Brand had come off best of anyone in this case.

Sæmund rode north with Þórð Sighvatsson to Geldingaholt where he asked for the hand of Ingun Sturla's daughter, Þórð's niece, and she was married to him. Þórð told Sæmund he wanted him never to give way to Ögmund, saying that there was no

lack of men or might. Sæmund now rode home to Svínafel with his wife; as soon as he reached home he prepared a feast and invited his brother Guðmund from Kirkjubær. Guðmund said he would eome but the mistress of his house, Steinun his father's sister, told him not to go. Neverthelcss, Guðmund rode to the feast accompanied by Egil skyrhnakk. The two brothers talked together a good deal at the feast but men did not know with any certainty what they talked about. When the feast came to an end Guðmund rode home to Kirkjubær and Sæmund gave him a horse. Guðmund stayed in Kirkjubær now for the rest of the summer but in the autumn he asked Ögmund for leave to go away, and said he wanted to take with him what he owned. Ögmund, however, was unwilling to allow this, though he said he would not forbid Guðmund to leave. Steinun, the mistress of the house, told Ögmund to grant Guðmund's request in the proper fashion; Ögmund then did so, and paid Guðmund the eapital sum which was involved; he took this with him and it was one hundred hundreds.[6] With this eapital he went to Sæmund and remained there quietly until after Christmas.

6

In the winter, after Christmas, Sæmund mustered his forees; he colleeted nearly eighty men and with this troop went to Kirkjubær. In the morning when they were preparing to leave, his wife Álfheið, Guðmund's mother, begged him not to make this expedition with Sæmund, on account of the honors and benefits which Ögmund had shown him. But Guðmund answered her rather angrily and told her not to keep on at him, that he shouldn't go along with his brother:

"I wouldn't think any more highly," he said, "of a man who withheld another's rights," and he said he had reached an age when he should decide for himself about expeditions. She replied that even so he was not ready for an expedition and told him to eome to the small living-room with her to change his clothes. While he was dressing she went out of the room and pushed the bolt across. When he realized this he seized a stone which

he found in the room, broke open the door, and got out. Sæmund and his companions were all ready and now rode with their troop to Kirkjubær. This was the night after the Feast of St. Pál.

There was a man named Illugi Guðmundarson on the place, a bailiff. He was married to a woman named Bergljót. They were out in the kitchen-house cooking that night and with them was a man named Þorvald, called feni. A dog was lying in the kitchen; he sprang up and barked. Illugi told Þorvald to find out what he was barking at. Þorvald went outside and stepped up on the building,[7] where he saw that the dog was facing north from the buildings; then he heard men talking and at once recognized the voices of the brothers Sæmund and Guðmund. Þorvald did not give away his presence but went straight back into the room up to the bóndi's bed, and said that men were coming in on the homestead,

"And it is not certain," he added, "that they are well-intentioned toward those who are here."

Ögmund asked whether he had any idea who they might be and his wife Steinun replied, "I don't need much time to guess—they must be my kinsmen Sæmund and Guðmund; now for God's sake and your own act in such a way that you do not add to the difficulties with my kinsmen."

Ögmund got up at once, seized some ten byrnies which hung in front of his bed, threw them out on the floor and bade his men get up. They dressed quickly, for the light was always burning at night. Ögmund bóndi seized several spears which were tied together in a bundle and carried this out to the church; other men on the place also went out to the church with their weapons. When the bóndi reached the church he counted his forces and there were fifty fighting men he thought able to bear arms. Ögmund, now armed and accompanied by Pétur Grímsson, went out to the steeple while Jón karl and Snorri sveim went out to the other steeple-door. They carried their spears pointing forward.

At this moment Sæmund and his men ran into the enclosure and Sæmund called out, bidding them run to the doors and also to the entrance on the north of the building:

"Rush in bravely," he shouted, "and don't let anyone offer resistance."

Ögmund then said, "If you want to find any men, go out to the church for the house is empty."

No one answered and they all ran down toward the church, into the churchyard, and encircled the building; then all drew their swords. Ögmund bóndi greeted both brothers, Sæmund and Guðmund. They took this coldly and asked why they were all in the church. Ögmund said that men had learned of the expedition and thought they had not come in peace: "But if you do come with other intentions then you will find a hospitable welcome here."

Sæmund said he had not intended to eat a meal there. "But what I ask is that you come out of the church."

Ögmund said they would not leave until it was light but he said Sæmund could do whatever he liked.

Then Guðmund said, "What more will you be able to do when it's daylight?"

Ögmund replied, "I never expected that you, my foster son, would say such things as I now hear from you."

"No one can guess what you mean by that," answered Guðmund.

"That may be true," said Ögmund, "but there are some men who will think that I was not undeserving of quite different words from you."

"That too may perhaps be true," said Guðmund, "if you had not been the cause of the enmity and unrelenting hostility between us brothers, even though our father gave you so much help that you could never have repaid such service even if you tried to by doing what you should do, and not by the wiles and tricks you are now said to be so good at."

Fjárgarð the Norwegian, who was in the brothers' force, now began to speak, demanding that they attack and not let the church serve as their protection. Sæmund said that could not be done and bade no man be so rash as to do any harm to the consecrated church. The deacon Móðólf, known as ganimað, managed to get out under the sill of the church and had a ham-

mer in his hand. Teit, called Hafr-Teit, was one of the brothers' followers; he had the deacon seized and asked what he meant to do, running about so furiously.

"You'll soon find out," he said and swung his hammer, striking Teit in the arm so that he let go of Móðólf. Móðólf then ran away to the river at Kirkjubær—it was filled with great lumps of ice at that time—threw himself out into the river and quickly got across by swimming; he reached the farmstead called Tunga and told the bóndi Halldór about the attack; he asked him to send word all around the farmstead about what was happening and tell everyone to go at once to Ögmund. The deacon returned immediately by the same route and when he reached the farmstead went to the bath-house because he had grown cold. But Teit went to Sæmund and told him a man had got away and that other men would therefore soon be coming in to attack them. Sæmund set off at once, ordering his men to ride away and telling them that he would ride on to Helgi Loftsson at Skál. They did as he said.

When it was quite light about eighty men came in to Ögmund's at Kirkjubær. Svart, the brother of Helgi at Skál, was there, and he argued vigorously for pursuit; some others also urged this. But the mistress of the house Steinun spoke against pursuit, saying she wished to spare both her bóndi and her brother's son and arguing too that no good would come of this rushing to arms. After this Ögmund rode off; this time he had given way. He rode to the north with six men to Þórð Sighvatsson at Geldingaholt. Ögmund told Þórð about his troublesome situation and Þórð replied that it was up to Ögmund himself how far he would give way to Sæmund:

"For you have greater means and are popular with the bóndis. Though you have no goðorð, yet the bóndis, I hear, wish you no less success than Sæmund. And though I am a kinsman of Sæmund I do not take his part in the persecution of anyone. But you can stay here with me for as long as you like."

When Orm's sons learned that Ögmund had ridden away Sæmund sent word to Kirkjubær ordering the bóndis to ride to meet with him; they did so and came to him at Skál. He made

it clear then that they had shown they were opposed to him even though they were his Þingmen.[8] He offered them two choices: they could swear oaths of allegiance to him, or he would take their property and their lives. They preferred to swear oaths of allegiance to him and to the brothers and promised not to desert their cause. With that they parted and the brothers now rode home. The winter was then quiet and without incident.

7

It is now time to tell about Ögmund, who spent the winter at Geldingaholt with Þórð Sigvatsson. In the spring, after Removing Days, he rode south across Kjöl but did not yet wish to ride home to Kirkjubær. Ögmund let it be known, however, that he had arrived in the district. The bóndis then sent word to him that they rather felt their hands were tied but Ögmund might act as freely with their properties as with his own and use whatever he needed. Ögmund then rode away from Síða, but people were not certain about his journey or where he might have headed.

8

The time for the Þing now approached and Sæmund collected a large troop. Þórð Sighvatsson had come to the Þing with a large company; at that time he alone governed all the Southern Quarter and the Northern Quarter,[9] after the death of Brand Kolbeinsson. Gizur was then in Norway.

Sæmund brought forward the lawsuit he had given up the preceding summer when Abbot Brand was at the Þing. This now proceeded smoothly for no one was there to answer for Ögmund. The upshot was that Ögmund was declared an outlaw. Þórð then rode back north and that summer went to Norway; it was commonly said that he came out of that case with some difficulty. When Abbot Brand learned of these events he showed that he was not pleased with them.

Sæmund rode to Kirkjubær and called a Court of Execution[10]

on Ögmund's holdings; everything was divided: first the church possessions were divided between the two relatives and after that everything else. Steinun took for herself all the goods which she claimed as hers, including what Ögmund had given to her, for Sæmund said that he trusted what she said completely. But it went much against the wishes of Sæmund's followers that he should let all that wealth go; however, he said they were to have no say in this matter.

Sæmund took away these properties: thirty cows and twelve cows' worth of young calves, four plough-oxen, one hundred ewes, fifty geldings, seventy year-old sheep, twenty horses, twenty-five pigs, fifty tame geese, twelve shields, twelve spears, six steel helmets, six byrnies, ten chests, and a horse laden with bed clothes. When they had carried off all this wealth Sæmund's followers all gave a loud shout, but he bade them be silent. The mistress of the house burst out weeping, and one woman said this was inexcusable and that it struck her to the heart to lose so much. The mistress of the house retorted:

"You may think that I'm weeping over the possessions which they have now taken away, but that is not so, for I would like those to have them who need them most, if they had not been taken as they have. I weep rather for what I fear will happen next."

She went to the church now and prayed for them all together; she prayed to God that strife among these kinsmen would be prevented while she lived. And things turned out as she prayed. They took the goods which have been listed to Svínafel and now remained quiet for the rest of the summer. Orm's sons kept many men about them at that time.

9

Abbot Brand now rode to meet his kinsman Sæmund and asked him to accept reconciliation with Ögmund. Sæmund was quite prepared to do this if Ögmund showed that he would be reasonable. Sæmund told the abbot to arrange a reconciliation, an unconditional truce and a firm peace between them. The

abbot thanked Sæmund for his words and said he hoped that everything would go well for him. After this the abbot rode home to Kirkjubær and told his sister Steinun that Sæmund had promised him he would be reconciled with Ögmund. She was thoroughly delighted at this and sent a man to meet Ögmund and ask him to ride home. Ögmund rode back home at once and his wife welcomed him joyfully, saying that they did not as yet suffer a shortage of anything he needed.

An unconditional truce was now established between Sæmund and Ögmund and complete good faith was promised—with the good will and advice of Abbot Brand, Mistress Steinun, Sæmund's mother Álfheið, and the counsels of many other good men. So it happened that Sæmund rode to Kirkjubær that winter after the reconciliation and with him were Þorstein Skeggjason and a few other men. Ögmund went out to meet him with all those of his men at the homestead who were armed—every man carried some sort of weapon. Ögmund greeted Sæmund amicably and invited him to stay there but Sæmund said he would ride on to meet Abbot Brand, which he did. When they rode away Þorstein was talking with Sæmund, saying that to him Ögmund did not seem trustworthy. Sæmund bade him be silent and not say such a thing, "For we are now reconciled."

Þorstein replied that that would now have been tested—"Had your brother Guðmund been with you."

Sæmund met the abbot and told him there were some men who thought Ögmund was not much to be trusted in this peace agreement. The abbot said this would not prove to be true and Sæmund replied,

"My foreboding, sir, is that I shall find it hard to report any such attack on my life as one by Ögmund whom you trust."

The abbot bade him keep the peace on his part as well as he could, saying this would be the best safeguard. Sæmund said that he would do this and then they parted in friendship; they did not meet again in this life.

Ögmund remained at home for the winter and was rather quiet. He always talked in the most friendly way about the brothers whenever they came into the conversation. One time,

during the winter and before Lent, he sent a man to Sæmund with a letter. Among several friendly declarations written in the letter was his request to Sæmund to be on good terms with the bóndis in those cases in which they were all involved, saying that thereby they would be more loyal to him and give him greater support when he needed it:

"Furthermore, comparatively few men are traveling about the countryside now that such a bad season has fallen upon us, for this is a very severe winter, disastrous for both food and pasture."

Sæmund made only brief reply to this but still he thought about these comments. It happened at Kirkjubær that winter, during Lent, that Mistress Steinun fell ill and lay in bed for all of Lent. On Maundy Thursday she received the Last Sacrament and died the Saturday before Easter. This news was at once proclaimed in the church[11] to all the people; to everyone this seemed a grievous event but most of all to her husband and sons. She was buried on the day after Easter. At her grave stood her brother Abbot Brand and a host of other men, for she was dearly loved by everyone as long as she lived.

10

On the Friday after Easter Week Sæmund rode from home with three men; with him rode his brother Guðmund and their kinsmen Klæng and Þorstein Skeggjason. They intended to meet Abbot Brand for they had earlier exchanged messages with each other. After this he intended to ride to his friend Helgi at Skál. Friday evening they rode into a place named Hörgsland, in Síða; Sæmund had a homestead there. In front of the homestead there was a man named Sölmund. Sæmund had settled him there earlier when he took the land over from Hákon smið Móðólfsson.

In the evening when they were coming from the bath-house Sæmund told the woman who was drying him to rub his neck with the towel as hard as she could, "For it itches me terribly."

She did as he said but he then said, "You are not rubbing."

Then she took a cloth and rubbed as vigorously as she could.

In the morning Guðmund related a dream he had had.

It was learned immediately that evening in Kirkjubær that Orm's sons had spent the night in Hörgsland. The laborers in Kirkjubær got up to work as usual on Saturday morning, asked the bóndi what they were to do, and Ögmund said, "First go and eat."

When they had eaten they went to the bóndi Ögmund. By then he was dressed and they thought it rather odd, for he wore a byrnie and over that a coat-of-mail, and on his head a steel hat which was all rusty. In one hand he had an axe named Svartleggja which he often carried; in the other, a shield. He was a very large and strong man, extremely powerful, red-haired, with a heavy face and a big, somewhat crooked nose; he was a taciturn man most of the time. Beside him was his son Jón karl; he also was armed and was wearing a ringed byrnie. With them were Þórarin Snorrason from Ás, Egil skyrhnakk, Snorri sveim, Árni gullskegg, and Brand Guðmundarson. They too were all armed. Ögmund provided weapons for all his housecarles so that he went out with twelve men. They turned to the church where they stayed for a short while; after that Ögmund went east along the glen with these men and they took up a position in a hollow a short way from the road.

11

It is now time to tell about Sæmund and his kinsmen: they got up in the morning at Hörgsland, ordered their horses, and mounted; they were all riding in painted saddles.[12] They now took the usual road to Kirkjubær, as far as the ditch which crosses the road down below Kirkjubær, a short distance from the hollow where Ögmund and his men were lying in ambush.

Sæmund was riding in the lead—he was wearing a parti-colored cloak, red and green, and had thrown over himself a piece of wadmal the edges of which had been sewn together, for the fog was very heavy and there was a drizzling rain. He wore a steel hat on his head, was girt with a sword and had a shield hanging at his saddle-bow. He was a man of medium height, very courteous, with fair hair, and had well-set eyes

although rather an ugly-shaped mouth—still, attractive in face—and a man as vigorous as the strongest among men.

His brother Guðmund rode next to him. He wore a dark cloak and had thrown over this a striped covering; he rode in full armor. He was a tall man, stocky, broad-shouldered but slender-waisted, with red-gold and abundant hair, full-faced and handsome in appearance, pleasant in conversation.

Next to him rode Þorstein Skeggjason. He was of middle height, and was a taciturn man by temperament. Last of all rode Klæng. He was a tall, slender man, fair-haired and well built. Both of Skeggi's sons were armed. When the others rode out by the ditch, Ögmund stood up and gave orders to lay hold of them.

Þorstein Skeggjason said, "Do you see, Sæmund, how Ögmund means to bar our way here and has a good many men with him?"

Sæmund asked, "What is this all about?"

"That remains to be seen," said Þorstein.

Sæmund rode forward along a narrow stretch of the road. Ögmund came down from the bank and grabbed Sæmund below the shoulders with both hands, intending to drag him off his horse, but he did not succeed because Sæmund was firmly fixed in his stirrups, which he had fully extended. Three other men grabbed at him along with Ögmund, while some of them loosened his saddle-girth; in this way they brought him down. But Snorri sveim and Brand Guðmundarson pulled Guðmund from his horse. Þórarin Snorrason and Árni gullskegg pulled Þorstein from his horse. Klæng got up out of the ditch, sprang off his horse and brandished his sword. Egil skyrhnakk saw this and struck at Klæng with his spear so that he fell back into the ditch and lost hold of his sword. Jón karl now came up, reached his spear-shaft out to him and told him to take hold of it. Klæng stood up, took hold of the spear and said,

"I ask for quarter, kinsman."

"That is easily granted," Jón said, "but I will take your weapons in return."

Klæng complied with this. Jón then went up to Þorstein, offered him quarter and in return took his weapons.

Now Sæmund said, "What is the meaning of this, Ögmund? I thought we were reconciled."

Ögmund said, "You are to die and so is your brother Guðmund."

"I demand a priest," said Sæmund.

"A short time ago you did see a priest," Ögmund said.

"Aet according to God's teaching," Sæmund replied.

Jón karl then said that a priest would be sent for. There were three priests in the see: Þormóð was the name of one; Hjalti, of the second; and Sæmund, of the third. The priests now came and Þormóð and the remaining two asked for quarter. But the priest Sæmund spoke blusteringly and said Ögmund would pay the penalty later for this atrocity if it were carried out. Ögmund heard what they said but paid no attention to it. Sæmund Ormsson asked Ögmund to send for Abbot Brand, saying that he wanted to talk to him. Ögmund said there was no hope of this. And when there was no possibility of quarter Sæmund was shriven by the priest Þormóð, Guðmund by the priest Hjalti, and they both received the Sacrament, the flesh and the blood of the body of Jesus Christ. Then they read the Prayer for the Dying. Sæmund now threw off his outer cloak, fell to his knees, hid his face in his hands and prayed for mercy to God Almighty. He went to his death with resolution and with hope for salvation.

Ögmund said to Árni gullskegg: "Take this axe and strike Sæmund in the head if he does not lie down."

Sæmund then sank to the ground, holding his hands before his eyes. Árni struck him through the neck so that the axe stood fast in the sand and his head fell from him. Men wondered greatly that the body did not bleed. Guðmund Ormsson and the priests now read the Seven Penitential Psalms, and no one could discern that he was in any way affected by these events, except that he spoke the words somewhat more harshly than before. He was then eighteen years old. When they had read the Psalms, Guðmund said to Ögmund: "May God be with you, foster father; I ask quarter from you."

Ögmund looked away and said, "We dare not grant it, foster son."

And he was as red as blood. Then Guðmund broke out: "A short distance from you there lies a man of such stature that there is no honor in living now that he is dead."

After this Ögmund walked away and sat down; his face was much swollen. Then Jón karl said: "You, Guðmund, are to take the same road as your brother."

Jón then demanded of some men that they kill Guðmund, but no one would so do because Guðmund was much loved by many people. There was a man named Þorstein and called hrakauga; during the day he had been out collecting grain and now arrived back at the kitchen door. Illugi bryti was standing there and Þorstein asked who were all those men.

"That is no concern of yours. Look after the harness and put the horses out to pasture."

Þorstein cut through the girth-straps on the pack-saddles, cutting the pack-saddle harness and also the packs free from the horses. He then leapt on a horse and rode swiftly east out of the enclosure, and on until he came up with Ögmund and his companions. Jón observed that he should have something to do, and he put in his hand the same axe with which Sæmund had been killed. Þorstein took the axe but had no word to say. Then Ögmund's son Sigmund, eleven or twelve years old, broke out: "Do what they want, Þorstein."

Guðmund said as he had earlier done that it was good to be alive, but no one answered him. Then he lay down on the ground, and he was almost smiling. Þorstein went up to him with his axe raised; he struck at Guðmund and the blow landed at the junction of his neck and shoulder, cutting deep into the shoulder blade. This was a severe wound: the head of the axe cut farther down so that his shoulder and shoulder-joint showed through. Most of the men who were not captive now moved off, intending to leave; it was very clear to everyone that much had happened and everyone greatly disliked these deeds. Brand Guðmundarson now went forward, put his hand down into the wound to find out how deep it was, and felt with his fingers. Then he spoke to Ögmund and his son Jón: "You do not intend Guðmund to die unless you do something more about it."

Jón now told Þorstein hrakauga to strike him a second time so that he might be completely deprived of life, but he refused. Jón said that it would be worse to do anything else, and Þorstein went back to where Guðmund was lying. Most of those present gave some thought to his soul and the priests there prayed for him. Þorstein raised the axe high and steady, then struck him in the neck so that he cut off his head.

The participants now went away home. Guðmund's body did not bleed much. The priests busied themselves with the body while Skeggi's sons were seized, locked securely in a little room and threatened with death immediately after the holy day. It was then past three in the afternoon.

12

Ögmund and his son now divided their forces. Ögmund rode to Þykkvabær[13] to Svart Loftsson. He was just then in the kitchen, where his head was being washed. When he saw the men riding into the farmstead the lad Þorkel, his son, said, "The priest has come, father."

Svart went outside and Ögmund seized him at once. But Svart greeted him courteously and asked the news. Ögmund told him what had happened and Svart then asked for quarter for himself.

"I do not intend to kill you," said Ögmund, "but I do intend to cut off your hand."

"I don't consider that better than death," said Svart.

"That is what is going to happen," said Ögmund, "even though you consider it worse."

"Still, you would accept my paying compensation, going abroad, and never returning to Iceland as long as I knew you were still alive," said Svart.

"I could easily bear to see you," said Ögmund, "but I don't know who would be satisfied by the compensation."

And with that he threw Svart to the ground, held his fingers spread out, and bade Árni gullskegg strike off his hand. Árni said this seemed to him a wicked thing to do.

"All the same, you must do it," and Ögmund.

Árni strode forward then with raised axe. Ögmund said, "Don't strike my hand!"

Árni said that was what he wanted to do. Then Árni struck Svart on the arm above the wrist, but his hand was not severed. Ögmund now shoved a buckler under the arm, and a second time Árni struck at his arm, just where it was thickest. Ögmund now carried Svart into the bathhouse where he bound up his arm. After this he returned to Kirkjubær.

13

It is now time to tell of Jón karl. He rode with six men up to Helgi Loftsson's at Skál. Helgi was standing in the yard with some men and had a cape around him. Egil skyrhnakk rode up from east of the church. Helgi recognized the man and went to the church. Egil followed him and seized his cloak but Helgi let go the cloak and got into the church. Then Egil said: "The fox escapes the hound if he sees him in time."

Then Egil added that the church would be no protection for Helgi because he was not consecrated. Jón said he would not have Helgi dragged out of the church, "For we are not going to add atrocity to misfortune."

With that they rode away, and Ögmund showed his displeasure with their expedition.

Accompanied by the priests, Þorstein and his brother carried home the bodies of their two brothers.

14

Ögmund now sent for Abbot Brand who rode straightway to Kirkjubær. The brothers were buried there and he stood at their grave. Ögmund submitted the case to Abbot Brand and to Skeggi of Skógar.[14] They stipulated ninety hundreds for each of the brothers and thirty hundreds for the cutting off of Svart's hand. Furthermore, Ögmund was not to be three nights longer in Síða unless he went to the monastery at Þykkvabær. And Jón karl was to go on a pilgrimage and be out of the country for three years. Árni and Þorstein were to go abroad and never return to Iceland as long as they lived.

Jón and Þorstein went to Norway in the same ship, and intended to go on their pilgrimage. But Jón lost a leg from an inflammation in his knee joint, and later he died of this. Þorstein then remained behind[15] and never returned to Iceland. Árni went to Norway on the ship Sindri, and died while he was abroad.

Ögmund paid the entire fine which had been stipulated. In the spring Ögmund moved to the homesteads in Dal below Eyjafjöl, but had only a few possessions. With him went Egil skyrhnakk and Snorri sveim. The priest Arnór, known as skull,[16] went to Kirkjubær according to Abbot Brand's ruling.

The Saga of Þorgils skarði

The Saga of Þorgils skarði

1

Böðvar, a son of Þórð Sturluson, lived at Stað. He was married to Sigríð Arnór's daughter and their sons were Þorgils, Sighvat, and Guðmund. Their daughters were Helga who had been married to Pál Sámsson but later married Þjóðólf kotkarl, Aldís who married Þórð Hítnesing, Hallbera who married the priest Gunnlaug Hallfreð's son, Guðrún, and Vigdís. Böðvar's eldest son was Þorgils. Bishop Guðmund eonfirmed him when he was two years old and asked from what family he eame. People told him and then asked him what he thought of the lad.

He said, "If this boy lives to a ripe age and prospers, he will be a valiant man and a great ehieftain. But it will not surprise me if he does not die of old age."

Guðmund gave the lad a gold brooeh and wished him sueeess. Þorgils was a handsome youth in appearanee, broad-shouldered, aeeomplished, with fair hair and skin, and with very fine eyes; he was narrow-waisted though broad-shouldered, and had thin hair whieh fell neatly. He was strong and tough, a good swimmer, and unflagging in every undertaking. He said little but was a man of his word: whatever he promised, for good or ill, he was quiek to earry out. He was born with a harelip and was therefore ealled Þorgils skarði.

Sighvat Böðvarsson was slow in growing but was nevertheless a powerful and an agile man, a strong and able wrestler. He was also a good swimmer, skillful, rather wordy but very elever in matters of law. He was not handsome in appearanee but yet was rather grand to look at; aeeomplished, unpredietable, and somewhat hot-tempered.

Guðmund Böðvarsson was handsome in appearanee, a man of

powerful stature, hardy in physical activities, for the most part easy to get on with and a man who greatly enjoyed a good time.

Þorgils Böðvarsson grew up at Stað with his father until Snorri Sturluson was killed at Reykjaholt. Gizur then offered Böðvar the choice of swearing an oath of allegiance to him or of giving him a hostage. Böðvar decided to give Gizur his son Þorgils and his brother Guttorm Þórðarson as hostages. Þorgils was then fifteen years old. They spent that winter with Gizur at Tunga, and he provided another two men, Björn Sigurðarson and Stein Bersason, to serve them. Gizur was well disposed toward Þorgils, considered him well-behaved, and gave him a place next to himself. Þorgils was rather hard to deal with and of a different temperament. Guttorm was on good terms wtih everyone. Gróa, Gizur's wife, was the kindest of anyone to them.

It happened one time that Þorgils Böðvarsson and Gizur's kinsman Sám Magnússon fell out over a game of tafl.[1] Sám wanted to take back a knight which he had exposed to capture but Þorgils would not let him do so. They snapped at each other and then Markús Marðarson suggested that the knight should be taken back, saying, "Don't quarrel about a game of tafl."

Þorgils said that Markús' words counted for nothing with him, swept the tafl-pieces together and thrust them into his pouch; then he stood up and struck Sám under his ear so that it bled, saying, "It is hard to know whether we will now in any way dare to assert our rights before our kinsman Gizur."

Someone now ran off and told Gizur, who came in and asked whether Sám had not the courage to avenge himself. Guttorm and Gróa had been sitting on the cross-bench when Gizur entered the room and they heard him reprimand the boys angrily. They went up to them now with the priest. Þorgils answered Gizur rather provokingly. Gróa took Gizur by the hand and said,

"Why are you so short-tempered? It seems to me that you might have to answer for it if he has done something which requires compensation."

"I don't want your opinion in this matter," Gizur replied.

She answered, "Then I will offer compensation if that's necessary."

They led Þorgils off and told him to answer Gizur courteously, but Þorgils refused to do so. Many others now offered an opinion, claiming that it was a boyish prank. The matter was then dropped but Gizur was less genial towards Þorgils than before.

Before Christmas Gróa had made a green kirtle of new cloth for Þorgils and he then gave Sám a blue kirtle which he had owned, and they were good friends ever after.

That winter Órækja, the son of Snorri Sturluson, had Klæng Bjarnarson slain at Reykjaholt on the second day of Christmas, and after that he and his men attacked Gizur at Skálaholt. The battle took place on the ninth day of Christmas. Þorgils was in the church then because Gizur did not want him to be in the fighting. The end of it was that Gizur and Órækja were reconciled, and after this Þorgils and Guttorm went back west to Stað.

2

Next it is to be told that when Þorgils was eighteen years old he decided to go abroad with a man named Eirík skarði who was a Norwegian. A man named Berg, the son of Ámundi Bergsson and of Þóra Þorvald's daughter, accompanied Þorgils. While Þorgils was on shipboard Þórð Sighvatsson came on board and he and Þorgils talked amicably together. Þórð promised him his support whenever he might need it and invited him into his household if he wished to come. Þorgils said that he would have accepted this if he had been invited earlier, but added that he did not now want to give up his journey. Þórð said that the offer held good even though he might not accept it until later. They parted from one another in friendship.

Þorgils and his companions put out to sea and had a good voyage; they landed at Bergen. Eirík invited Þorgils and his companions to be his guests and they accompanied him then to Sogn. But Þorgils said he wanted to stay with the most distinguished men in the district. At that time the most powerful man in Sogn was Brynjólf, the son of Jón stál, who had his chief homestead at Hvál. When Þorgils came home with Eirík the latter treated him hospitably and with great honor. Þorgils might have been quite content among the folk there, but he did not

like the homestead. It was Eirík's custom when he came home from merchant voyages to have a feast for his friends and invite his neighbors, and he was no less minded to do this now that men who seemed distinguished had come home with him. He invited Brynjólf of Hvál and Þórir of Steði. There were a great many people there and a splendid feast. Brynjólf and Þorgils sat beside each other, talked together at length and got on very well. It seemed to Brynjólf that he could see that Þorgils was much more well-mannered than most men; Brynjólf was also well-informed about his family and invited Þorgils and Berg to be his guests, adding that this would be nothing but a pleasure for him. Þorgils wanted to accept but Berg was rather disinclined; however, Þorgils made the decision and they went away with Brynjólf.

When they reached his home he made them welcome with open arms, enjoyed considerable merriment with Þorgils and gave him a position next to himself. Brynjólf gave them a boy named Pétur to serve them. It turned out that the lad was careless whereas Þorgils was rather exacting, so that the lad was not free from beatings from time to time. However. Brynjólf did not like this for the lad came from his family. There was a splendid household there with many people; often there were long and merry drinking-feasts, but the bóndis[2] could not always entirely live up to the demands of these drinking-feasts.

There was a man named Geirmund, a neighbor and kinsman of Eirík skarði. He had become a friend of Þorgils while he was with Eirík and had given him a snag-horned axe like a halberd, not large but of the finest iron. He was at Brynjólf's Christmas feast with Eirík and drank incautiously; there was much drinking on that occasion and many men emptied the vítishorn.[3]

Björn was the name of a man who lived with Brynjólf, an older man who had been with him a long time, and had the job of bringing in the ale and serving the drink for daily use. Björn seemed to Þorgils somewhat stingy with the daily supply of drink, and he suspected furthermore that Björn carried tales and slander between him and Brynjólf; he was therefore rather short with him. Björn had a hasty temper; he thought he held

an assured position and was offensively self-confident and jealous. A place beside Berg had been appointed for Eirík, next was one for Geirmund, and next the bóndis were seated one after the other—nor were they a small company. Berg never drank much because he was ill and supposed not to drink more than he wished to; he never drank the vítishorn. Brynjólf was friendly with him, finding him frank and not ill-natured. Þorgils was a great drinking-man, always good-natured when in his cups.

On the evening of the eighth day of Christmas the drinking was at its height and as time went on wine was also provided. On one bench sat Brynjólf's free housecarles and two of King Hákon's retainers,[4] Árni Ívarsson and Ketil lang. First they drank in companionship, passing the horn around; but then they began to drink individually, each draining his own horn; some of the men were by then quite drunk. Geirmund talked volubly about feeling unwell and said the drink seemed to be adulterated. Björn now bore a flagon to Geirmund but he struck it with his hand, thrusting it upward in Björn's grasp so that the drink spilled down on his helmet. Björn was angry at this and spoke furiously; he called Geirmund a clumsy fool and struck him on the nose with his knife so that blood poured down all over him; Geirmund retorted to this very angrily. Þorgils was the first to jump up; he grabbed a large deer-horn drinking-cup, heavy with its wealth of silver and stones, and struck Björn between the shoulders so that he fell forward and his forehead struck the flagon he had been holding. His forehead was slightly injured and the flagon broken all to pieces. Þorgils wanted to strike him again but Berg held him back. Brynjólf and all his men now ran up, as did Eirík with his bóndis, and Þorgils joined their group. Everyone came to blows and at this Brynjólf was very angry.

Eirík said to Brynjólf: "Do something to settle this brawl, bóndi, and it will reflect honor on you and on everyone who is involved in this matter."

Brynjólf said, "Up to now we would never have expected men to strike one another in my home."

Árni then said, "You might take note, bóndi, who struck first. You and the men of Sogn are used to drinking until nobody

knows what he's doing. Björn was struck no sooner than could be expected."

Many men now tried to intervene helpfully but Árni went straight on: "Fortunately no one has been seriously wounded here, and for that reason we will find it easy to talk about a settlement. But first let us sleep on it, and talk it over tomorrow when men are sober. Then we will all see the matter in the same light."

Eirík and many others agreed to this and the men went off to their sleep. The following morning the bóndis went to divine services; then men went to the drinking-hall and, when they arrived, all sat down.

Árni said, "Everyone knows what happened among the men here yesterday evening. Now we are all sober and can consider this case in its true light. It is not right, bóndi, that what happened should bring displeasure to you, but it seems to me that he who was first to break the peace of Christmastide in your home did not fully merit peace himself."

"That is the way it looks to me," Ketil interrupted.

"And," said Björn, "I can promise you this, Árni, though you give little thought to my shame nevertheless one of two things will happen—either I shall get full satisfaction or I will avenge myself."

Þorgils said, "If you seriously threaten to inflict any injury on me, Björn, I will inflict such twofold injury on you that you will feel it to the depths of your being."

Björn spoke at length but Þorgils remained silent. Not everyone's suggestions can be reported here but the best advice was offered by the retainers Árni and Ketil, together with Eirík and Berg: they urged Þorgils to yield to the bóndi Brynjólf and the advice of the worthiest men present. But Þorgils remained silent, as he usually did when he was angry. Men now offered all kinds of suggestions but the matter was settled according to the decision Brynjólf bóndi made with the advice of the most reputable men present, those who likewise most wanted the matter settled by squaring off one offense against another and having no further compensation offered. Each man now granted quarter to the

other, and finally they all sat down to their drink. The bóndi was now very contented, as was everyone else, and they celebrated till the end of Christmastide.

After that the bóndis went home and each one spread word in his establishment that Brynjólf's winter-guest was not a man to be trifled with. An Icelander named Gunnar who was with Brynjólf composed a verse about this in such a way as to provoke laughter:

1. The man of mild mood
Strikes Björn blund in the back—
With flagon not sword
Seeks vengeance for Geirmund.
Then the silly fool falls,
Blood pours from his nose,
and men find it fitting
Þorgils caused him such suffering.

After Christmas there was little friendliness between Brynjólf and Þorgils though they got on well enough.

3

Next it is to be told that Brynjólf had an errand across the fjord, to obtain a shield and weapon of his. It seemed to him a good idea to test Þorgils' good nature, so he asked him to undertake the trip, for there were not many men in the household then. But Þorgils said that he would act as messenger or steward in Norway only for someone more prominent than Brynjólf, and it seemed to Brynjólf then that the same thing would often recur. Berg offered to go with other men for Brynjólf's shield in place of Þorgils, and Brynjólf accepted. Berg fell ill during the winter, lay in bed a long time and was near death, but as time went on he began to improve.

As far as we know, from now on nothing to tell of happened concerning Þorgils' sojourn there.

4

In the spring after Easter Brynjólf prepared for his journey south to Bergen to meet King Hákon. Þorgils and Berg, who

was now able to travel, went with him. When they came south they met King Hákon who received them warmly. The king had heard that during the winter there had been with Brynjólf an Icelander, one of the Sturlungs, who was much talked of. It is true, as men say, that a king has many ears. He had heard about the exchanges between Brynjólf and the Icelanders during the winter.

At that time Aron Hjörleifsson was staying with the king. He had been shown great friendship by Böðvar when he had been outlawed by Sturla Sighvatsson. Aron was a retainer of King Hákon who was partial to him; he was also a valiant man. Aron went up to Þorgils and greeted him courteously, saying, "Whatever good offices I can do for you are yours to command, whether they require money or backing."

Þorgils thanked him warmly and said nothing would please him more than to stay with Aron, "But still, I must first remain for a while with Brynjólf."

Aron did not have much in the way of supplies but he spared nothing in respect of his friends. He invited Þorgils to his place, for he had a home which was always full of Icelanders. Then Þorgils and Aron parted; Þorgils went with Brynjólf to the establishment he owned and they settled down to the drinking there. During the day Brynjólf remarked,

"You have spent the winter with me, and I will admit that matters have gone well. But I have observed that your eyes are turned towards something larger, towards serving a greater man than I am. And it is true that such men as you are made to serve kings. I do not say this to you because I grudge you food or drink, but because I am prepared to plead your case with the king so that he will take you on and make you his follower, as I suspect you have a mind to be."

Þorgils thanked him for his words but said that he very much wanted to return to Iceland. However, if he could not get permission to do this then he would happily enter the king's service and become his man. A little later Brynjólf and the king met each other and in the course of their conversation the king asked about the Icelander who had spent the winter with Brynjólf.

Brynjólf told the king of Þorgils' family and the king at onee knew who he was, for many of the Sturlungs had stayed with him.

Brynjólf told the king that Þorgils wanted "to obtain your permission to go baek to Ieeland."

The king said that there was no hope of this—for at this time King Hákon was holding many powerful men in Norway beeause he wanted very mueh to exaet tribute from Ieeland. The king said, "Was this the man who was with you yesterday when we met—a big, strong man with a handsome and expressive eountenance, but with a large sear on his faee and so young that he has not yet grown any beard?"

"That is the man, preeisely," said Brynjólf, "and will you be so good, sir, as to reeeive him graciously and let him join your following, if he may not yet sail for Ieeland to see his kinsmen and properties? He is not a rich man here."

The king reaeted well to this and Brynjólf then sent for Þorgils who eame before the king and greeted him. The king did reeeive him graeiously. Aron Hjörleifsson was present and on Þorgils' behalf reeommended that the king reeeive him with honor. The king said that Þorgils should reeeive the rank of retainer if he proved to be what Brynjólf and Aron had elaimed and if this seemed proper to the king, but that this would not be deeided immediately. Þorgils said that he was not willing to wait a long time for this, and that he had expeeted, when he sought out other lands, to find a plaee where he would be taken into the following of a great man, inasmueh as his father's brother Óláf had been with King Valdimar in Denmark and had reeeived great honor from him.

Aron said, "You take in other men, sir, who are not so good a bargain as this man."

Brynjólf said, "You ean be eertain, sir, that it will be a bold fellow who oeeupies the plaee where Þorgils means to stand."

The king smiled at this and Þorgils said, "Will you grant me leave, sir, to go freely wherever else I wish, as long as I do not go to Ieeland?"

"Certainly not," replied the king. "I ean see that you are an impatient and rather headstrong man, and it does not seem to

me I should be denying you any honor if I want first to see what I think of your services."

With this they parted. Þorgils told Aron that he had decided to join him, and Brynjólf and Þorgils now parted from one another amicably.

Ragnhild was the name of Aron's wife; she was an exceptionally thrifty woman but he spent no more slowly than she saved. Þorgils stayed with them for a while, but he found it difficult to lay his hands on money, as he saw that Aron was not well off, and wanted in whatever way he could to compensate Aron for what it cost him to have Þorgils live with him. They had a large following there, not at all meek men.

5

When the ships began to make ready in the spring, Þorgils had a message written on a wax tablet and sent to the king. It was written there that he asked the king to grant him leave to go to Iceland or to other countries, saying that he no longer wanted to remain under constraint. When the king saw this he realized that Þorgils was moved by a pride and arrogance which would not let him plead his case like other men, and so the king sent for him. Þorgils came before the king; Queen Margrét, Ívar Englason the king's treasurer, and a few other men were with the king. Aron and Berg were with Þorgils. The queen was a great friend of the Sturlungs, as her father Skúli had been. She invited Þorgils to sit down by her and he sat on a footstool at her feet.

The king then said, "Have you asked to return to Iceland, Þorgils?"

"Yes, my lord," said Þorgils.

The king said, "I shall now tell you what your situation is to be: you are to remain here and go nowhere else. I will make you my retainer as you have requested; but I have heard that you and your companions seem not to have been entirely peaceful."

The queen said, "This is often the case with young men."

Aron said, "I will answer for it if there has been any fault here."

The king said, smiling, "I do not know whether you can take on more than yourself to answer for."

The king now began to ask Þorgils about Iceland, about his father and his kinsmen, about Þórð kakali and other chieftains. And Þorgils answered what the king asked. The king then asked who the man was who accompanied Þorgils, and Berg gave his name and his father's. Aron said Berg's father had been a wise man, prosperous, and a most prominent bóndi.

"Berg has requested a position in the royal household and the title of retainer, sir, as you may know."

The king replied, "Why should that not be granted, now that I have learned that he is a wise man? You, Þorgils, and your companion, are to stay in my guest-house for Ascension Day and after that to become members of my household."

The king gave Þorgils leaf-green cloth fourteen ells long. Þorgils was then in the king's guest-house for Ascension Day and on the Friday following both Þorgils and Berg became members of his household, or retainers.

The king gave Þorgils a shield and byrnie because he had lacked these weapons up to now. Þorgils stayed a long time in the king's household though he was thought rather hot-tempered.

6

It happened that one night fire broke out in the town and the alarm was sounded throughout the whole community. When the alarm reached the king's dwelling he dressed quickly and called to the men who were near him. He had all his retainers and all the townspeople called out against this danger; the men armed themselves as if for battle and the king stationed his guard where he thought there was most need. The king bade his men move cautiously but bravely. The fire raged so violently that men thought it unlikely it could be put out. They tried many attacks, brought fresh water and salt water and in many instances tore down a burning building. The king indicated where

Þorgils was to stand but he wanted to go much farther forward. In doing this he ran such great risk that it was thought unlikely he would survive without injury. Finally the king ordered the sail of a longship to be completely saturated and then thrown over the blaze and thus the fire was put out, by God's grace and the king's good fortune.

But Þorgils earned the praise of the king himself and of all who knew that no man had borne himself so well or acted as nobly as he, and in such great danger, as Sturla Þórðarson has celebrated in the elegy which he composed about Þorgils. After this Þorgils always got on better in the king's household, for the king put up with more from him than from most other men of comparable arrogance.

The day following the fire Þorgils came to the queen's quarters where she welcomed him warmly and thanked him for having acted so bravely during the night. When she saw that his clothes were burnt she gave him six ells of scarlet cloth, and he thanked her for this. Þorgils won great honor from this action, as is celebrated in the elegy:

2. The blaze broke out
As night filled men's homes.
The guard poured out
With their glorious king,
But the valiant Þorgils
Won all men's praise
Wherever flames blazed
Or fire raged against men.

7

Þórð kakali came from Iceland at this time; he had previously been in the battle at Haugsnes and in the events which resulted from this. Gizur was in Norway then and they now submitted themselves to the king's judgment. They put their case before the king so clearly that there was no disagreement between them. Þorgils came to meet Þórð and spent some time with him. One day when they were drinking in the king's house the king

said to Þórð: "Why don't you have something done about your kinsman's harelip?"

Þórð replied, "For that, sir, we need the support of your advice; but I will spare no cost if you think anything can be done about this."

The king said, "I think that something can be done," and he gave the name of Vilhjálm, a doctor.

They sent for the doctor and agreed on the payment. With the king's advice he proceeded with the treatment while the king himself sat nearby. It seemed to the men who were looking on that this must be very painful, but Þorgils endured it bravely. The sore healed so that Þorgils no longer had a harelip and was more handsome than ever.

Þórð kakali did not receive permission to go to Iceland, but remained with the king for a time until an estate was assigned to him. Þorgils stayed with the king for some years, feeling that he was bound to this but ill content with the situation.

8

King Hákon had made Knút, the son of Jarl Hákon galin, jarl in Trondheim. Knút jarl had grown into a very strong man of handsome appearance. He had many more gifts than other men, and there was not another man in Norway who could understand the properties of precious stones as he could. He was a famous drinker and men found him somewhat obstreperous when he was drunk.

The last winter Þorgils spent in Norway he was north in Trondheim with Eystein hvíti and they had a large company of Norwegians and Icelanders. Eystein was a good bóndi. Many other men in the town had joined him as king's men, both retainers and Guests.[5] The king was not staying in the town then. Þorgils was the most prominent of the king's men; Knút jarl was the most powerful man in the community, and had a large following. During the winter much dissension arose between the king's men and the jarl's.

One time Knút jarl was drinking at a house with Þorgils, along

with a large number of other men; they were rather drunk and talked at length about many things. Knút jarl spoke somewhat disparagingly about the men of Iceland, mentioning Snorri Sturluson and other Icelanders who had been with Duke Skúli. The jarl spoke of them all as rather unmanly, but Þorgils retorted that there were kinsmen of his who would not have thought they were in any way inferior to Knút except in title. The jarl did not like this at all; they broke into a harsh exchange of words and the result was that the jarl jumped up, cursing, and seized an axe. When Þorgils saw this he sprang up and drew his sword. But men pushed between them so thickly that neither could reach the other and they parted. A little later Þorgils and his companion went off. The night passed. The jarl rose and heard services; then he sent word to Þorgils inviting him to his quarters. Þorgils was reluctant to go but Eystein urged him to do so; he went to the jarl with Eystein and many other men together. The jarl was very gracious and they parted on good terms. Matters were quiet then for a time and they had but little to do with each other.

9

It happened one time that one of the jarl's men and one of the king's Guests fell out; they exchanged heated words until finally the Guest struck the jarl's man. This happened late in the day. When the Guest returned to his quarters and told about this event there were few men present, but most of them urged him to flee to the church or else seek refuge among the king's men where there were many men together.

The jarl quickly learned of this, for he knew exactly where the man had gone. The Guest had lost so much time that he came out of his quarters just as the jarl's men were coming out of theirs; they seized him, brought him to the jarl and grievously ill-treated him. By then it was dark so the jarl thought it not the time to kill him. He was put in fetters and thrown into a small room with men posted to guard him. The Guest had a mistress on the estate, and when she heard what had happened she ran, crying out loudly, to the household of Eystein hviti

where she told Þorgils skarði and others of the king's men into what grave danger her man had fallen, and that he would be slain unless they freed him by some means. She told her story with much passion.

Þorgils wanted them to get the man out at once by force, but Eystein wanted to summon the king's men, because their own numbers were too small either to get the man out or defend him afterwards. In the end they followed Eystein's wishes and the advice of several others—they summoned the king's men to them, and then prepared to defend themselves also. When they were ready Þorgils and Eystein went with their troop to the place where the man had been imprisoned. The guards were aware of this, and drew themselves up before the door, thinking that the others would not make a very serious attack. But Þorgils struck the man facing him a mighty blow with the back of his axe, and many others facing them were also beaten, so that they ran away. Þorgils went to the door and broke it open, took the man from his prison and brought him out, then broke off his fetters. The man now returned with Þorgils to his quarters.

The guards told the jarl how severely they had been mistreated. He was furious at this and had his bodyguard summoned with his followers and all those who were willing to join his troop. The jarl then had his standard brought out, armed himself and all his men. They went out through the town. It was reported to Þorgils and his men that the jarl was moving against them with armed warriors and proceeding with hostile intent. Þorgils now called to his men to go out to the fortification they had built and defend themselves manfully if it became necessary: "And let the king see that he has not stationed here men who are good-for-nothings."

They went out to the fortification; the jarl came up and asked, "Have you and your companions, Þorgils, roved about so destructively here that you have broken up dwelling-places, mishandled my men, and then taken away by force a man who by his own actions deserved to die?"

Þorgils said it was true that the man he sought was in their hands, "But for the rest, I think what was done requires little

discussion. Fortunately you are going to discover today whether Icelanders are as weak or insignificant as you said during the winter."

The jarl said, "Such actions show much arrogance in common men, seeking to be a match for us or even greater men."

Now he cited many grounds for complaint against Þorgils and continued to urge his men to attack. Þorgils said this would please him greatly, adding, "You will have something to remember, jarl, before you can lay hands on the man."

Men hesitated to attack because there were many in the jarl's company who had kinsmen and friends or men otherwise bound to them in that household. Eystein bóndi was so popular that no other bóndi was a greater favorite. Many of the more prominent men now interceded and carried on negotiations for a settlement between them. But the jarl was furiously angry and bade them set fire to the town. Þorgils however went out to the fortification with drawn sword and told the jarl to come within reach of it if he thought he had something to settle. Negotiations then began; men suggested to the jarl that it was very dangerous for him to show such hostility toward the king's men—and on the king's land. And finally it came about that the jarl was willing to accept self-judgment.[6] But when this was reported to Þorgils he flatly rejected it and told the jarl to attack or withdraw. Eystein said that Þorgils would require the king's judgment in the case. Þorgils said he wanted to wait until they met the king, and then he would decide about a settlement. Eystein objected that it was not customary for a case to remain unresolved.

Þorgils said, "I see, Eystein, that you are eager for a settlement."

"It is true," said Eystein, "that peace seems to me a good thing and that I am for the most part accustomed to it. But you, Þorgils, pursue this case as vigorously as you wish, for I will not be the first to part with you; before that happens everything available in this establishment shall be eaten and drunk before I will let myself be forced into a reconciliation with the jarl."

"That is well spoken," said Þorgils.

Then the mistress of the house, Jórun, went out into the enclosure and spoke as follows:

"I ask this of you, Þorgils: if I have shown you any kindness do not steer this affair into such a strait that you put yourself or my husband or any other good men in danger, if you see any chance at all for an honorable settlement."

Because of her persuasions Þorgils now yielded. Many men worked to reach an agreement and finally the jarl, by the persuasion of his friends, was willing to submit all the circumstances of the case to the king's judgment; they made an agreement that the king was to decide without restriction all the issues between them which he thought required judgment. Men thought Þorgils had shown authority in this matter, and he won much praise from the affair.

10

In the spring, after Easter, Þorgils and Eystein went to meet the king; he received them graciously. They told the king all that had happened between them and Knút jarl and the king was well pleased with the conclusion of the affair. Þorgils now stayed with the king. With the king at that time also were the reverend Bishop Heinrek, Gizur Þorvaldsson and Finnbjörn Helgason. They were all determined to return to Iceland and asked the king to make this possible. The king claimed that Snorri Sturluson's inheritance had fallen to him, as well as the worldly goods Snorri had possessed on the day of his death, with the exception of the see at Reykjaholt. Þorgils was to have full power to distrain and prosecute in all those cases which might involve legal claims over the ownership of Snorri's possessions. The king gave Finnbjörn full authority north of Vaðlaheið and assigned him a homestead at Grenjaðarstað. Gizur had his domain in the south and each one, Gizur and Þorgils, was to support the other. In the same way Finnbjörn was pledged to support them, and they, to support him. Bishop Heinrek promised allegiance to the king and to all the others. When this was agreed they made their ship ready for sea and sailed with Eystein hvíti to Iceland that summer.

Þórð kakali stayed behind in Norway and was not at all pleased with this, for he had earlier made over Snorri Sturluson's possessions to his friends, Skagafjörð and the homestead at Geldingaholt to Eyjólf Þorsteinsson, and Eyjafjörð and the homestead at Grund to Hrani Koðránsson, and Borgarfjörð to Þorleif Þórðarson. Hrafn Oddsson, Sæmund Ormsson, Sturla Þórðarson and Nikulás Oddsson were bound to Þórð by oath, by kinship, and by friendship.

In the spring before Þorgils and Gizur returned, Ögmund Helgason had Sæmund and Guðmund Ormsson killed. Eyjólf and Hrafn thought this a grave loss.

11

In the summer, Eyjólf, Hrafn, Sturla, and Þorleif met together in Vatnsdal and greatly lamented the slaying of Sæmund because of all the ties and relationships which Þórð had established before he went away. They decided to wait until they knew that the ship had left Norway, and that Þórð had returned or else was not expected to return. They agreed further that if Gizur arrived they would ensure his control of the nation and that of any other leader he called upon. Þorleif was reluctant about all this, and they thought he was acting timidly; thereafter they drifted apart from one another. But Eyjólf now invited them all to Geldingaholt for the Feast of St. Laurentíus.

12

In the summer, at the Feast of St. Laurentíus, there was a great banquet held at Geldingaholt. Hrafn Oddsson came, as did Sturla Þórðarson, Þórð Hítnesing, and Nikulás Oddsson. Þorleif of Garðar had sent a letter to Eyjólf and this was read aloud at the banquet. He said that Ögmund Helgason lived so near the church that no one could get near him when intending to take revenge on him, without his escaping into the church at once. Þorleif promised his loyalty and reliability in whatever they wished now to undertake. At the end of the banquet men rode away.

Sturla rode to Gunnsteinsstað in the evening. That was the Wednesday evening before the Feast of the Virgin Mary. When they went on their way in the morning Sturla was rather quiet. Þórð Hítnesing asked why he was so silent and Sturla said he was thinking about his dream. Þórð asked what he had dreamt. Sturla said he had dreamt that his father came to him and asked him for news; he said he had nothing to report, but in return asked if he knew anything. But Sturla's father Þórð said that he knew nothing, and added,

"'You have probably heard about the arrival of a ship in Eyjafjörð, and that there is a blaek bear on board which our kinsman Bödvar of Stað owns, and that this animal is said to be rather savage.'

"But when I wanted to ask more I woke up."

Þórð asked what Sturla thought this dream meant; he said he knew very well, and assumed that Þorgils Böðvarsson had either arrived in the land or would arrive soon. They thought this likely. Þórð then asked why he had been so quiet at Geldingaholt and Sturla replied, "Beeause I was disgusted with everything there, and everything there was less beneficial to me than had been promised. However, it will not surprise me if this was not the beginning of a separation between Eyjólf and me."

After that eaeh of them rode home.

13

The day following the Feast of the Virgin Mary the ship on which Þorgils Böðvarsson sailed reaehed land at Gásar. They reaehed Stað on the Feast of St. Barthólómeus and their kinsmen gave them a warm welcome. Þorgils summoned his friends and relations to come to him; his kinsman Einar Halldórsson, his cousin Þórð Hítnesing, and Gunnlaug Hallfreðarson came to him. Þorgils announced his plans, had his writ read aloud, and then called on men to join him in his venture. Men willingly went in with him. Þorgils rode from Stað with nearly forty men. Böðvar Þórðarson went, and his cousin Þórð Hítnesing with his brother Helgi, as well as those men who had returned to Iceland with Þorgils. He rode south to Borgarfjörð and stayed the night at

Stafaholt. Óláf Þórðarson was living there at that time. He called a meeting below Höfðahólar and to this came Þorleif of Garðar, Egil of Reykjaholt, and other bóndis of the district. The folk of the district behaved with some air of importance. Óláf Þórðarson rose and spoke, asking for God's protection, His Grace and Mercy; he asked furthermore that men give proper reception to the letters and messages from so noble a lord as King Hákon, and not do what many stupid fools did in giving silly answers to messages from such noble men—

"Which God forbid should happen here today, for what the king wishes will be fulfilled and will be best for all men."

Óláf then sat down; Þorgils now stood up and said: "Men know that I have called this meeting, and for this reason—that I am bound today to deliver the king's message. The king's letter will now be read out here, and I ask that men give it a good hearing and afterwards remember their oaths."

Þorgils held the letter in his hand, looked at the seal, and then bade Þorleif choose someone to read it if he would.

Þorleif refused, adding, "This is the situation: many covet this district, but few here today can give an answer to the king. This can well wait for another time, or until Hrafn and Sturla are present and we can all together come to some decision about our answer. For we know that this district has been assigned to you by the king and that this is the business before us today, but many men claim that the king has no rights here. I am not Snorri Sturluson's heir though I have, by Þórð's decision, some authority here. I am no more ready to advise about a reply in this matter than other men are."

Many men, who thought that the king did not deserve to have any voice in the decision about Snorri Sturluson's inheritance, now supported Þorleif; Þorgils said, "You will find, Þorleif, that I mean to have two or three of the king's letters read publicly here today so that you will hear them; nor will I keep secret this letter from the king, even though you have kept secret those letters from the king which have been sent to you. And it may be that you will have to give an answer here today without needing to consider any other forms of reply."

Þorleif lowered his head and made no other reply; after this he made few comments which were audible. Þorgils had the king's letter read—Þórð Hítnesing read it. When the letter had been read men were in no hurry to respond. Then Óláf Þórðarson said, "It is not the custom of courteous men to remain silent before the king's messages, but most men here want to leave the answer to Þorleif."

Þorleif replied, "I will not withhold the district from the king nor will I raise forces against those who take possession of it; but I am not going to recognize the legality of this."

Egil said that he had given Þórð title to the authority he had possessed, "And I have no answer to give at this time."

Most men put difficulties in Þorgils' way. Hauk of Álftanes spoke as follows: "My suggestion is that we do not come to any decision about the district until Hrafn and Sturla are here."

Þorgils said this was none of Hauk's concern, and added, "Your words are of no value now, though it is not unlikely that men will remember your counsel."

From now on there was no downright opposition, though no outright assent. Þorgils had the king's letter, which had earlier been sent to Þorleif, read aloud. Þorleif was severely reprimanded because he had ignored the king's letter, and there was considerable reproach and criticism of him because he had failed to show the king the honor which Gizur Þorvaldsson and Þorgils Böðvarsson demanded on his behalf.

Þorleif gave a firm answer, saying, "I am willing to make recompense, according to the opinion of good men, for not having joined the king when I was asked to do so."

Men now negotiated with Egil of Reykjaholt and the priest Þórarin Vandráðsson to see if they would cede the homestead at Reykjaholt to Þorgils. Finally they achieved this, much to most men's surprise. With this men parted. Þorgils rode away from the meeting to Stafaholt, stayed the night there and made arrangements for his men's journey out along the shore. Then he rode up to Reykjaholt where he took over the homestead. The housekeeper was to be the same, Guðlaug Ali's daughter, the mistress of Þórarin the priest. Þorgils now remained there

quietly; there were soon heavy expenses, for many men were already there and soon more came. Many men streamed in to join them but none went away.

In the autumn Eyvind bratt moved to Reykjaholt with his wife Sunnifa. Eyvind was a retainer of King Hákon; he was an old man with weak sight, a friend of the Sturlungs, but an enemy of Gizur.

14

In the autumn after the Feast of the Virgin Mary Þorgils Böðvarsson rode south to the ness with six men and put up at Garðar with Þorleif, but relations between them were rather cold. From there Þorgils rode to Hólm where he took a ship which Þorleif owned, crossed the fjord and put up at Saurbær with Magnús Árnason. There Þorgils learned that Gizur had come down to the ness and went to meet him. They met at Viðey and got on fairly well. Þorgils now rode home to Reykjaholt, accompanied by the tenants from Eyvindarstað and Bersastað.

Þorgils stayed for a time at Bær with Böðvar, who gave him two horses and a red shield inlaid with gold. Þorgils told Böðvar how chilly his relations had been with Þorleif and said that he did not think Gizur's loyalty as certain as he had hoped. Þorgils then rode home to Reykjaholt.

Men were now sent all around the district to collect the sheep-tax,[7] as it came to be called. Þorgils sent Berg down to Brekka to buy supplies of meat from the brothers Óláf and Þórhall, but he did not get it, and Berg had no great opinion of their replies. Near the Winter Nights[8] Þorgils rode from home accompanied by his followers, intending to ride out to Snæfellsnes. He rode to Borg in the evening. Loft the bishop's son was living there at that time. Þorgils and his men were twelve in all and they were very warmly received. The moors were not solidly frozen, but even so one could cross the winter-routes with a light step.

Þorgils rode from there the next day out to Brekka. They dismounted and let their horses have hay from underneath the fence. The bóndi did not come out, so Þorgils and his men went

into the hall and sat down on one of the benches. The bóndi Óláf was sitting on the cross-bench; his brother Þórhall was sitting on the cross-bench with one leg tucked under him. They greeted Þorgils but did not offer him any food. Þorgils wanted to buy supplies of meat from the brothers, but they replied as they had earlier that they would not sell. At first Þorgils spoke pleasantly but as the talk went on he gave vent to some rather heated words. They said Þorgils could rob them if he wanted to:

"But it is not unlikely that someone will seek redress for us. All the same we will not sell."

Þorgils now sprang up, saying, "Every nettle stings me furiously," and he struck Óláf on his steel cap.

Óláf had tucked in a double hat on his head. The blow struck his cheek and shoulder so that he fell down from the cross-bench and rolled down in front of the bench-planks. The mistress of the house reached down to him and slowly lifted him so that he crawled up to a corner of the bench. Þorgils struck a further blow at Þórhall, on the head; this was a powerful blow and made a loud crack. He fell off, pulling his leg in under him. Þorgils struck him again between the shoulders; Þórhall now uttered a groan and everyone was afraid he had been severely injured.

Þorgils and his men now rode away, down to Álftanes. When they rode into the courtyard of the homestead there came out to meet them a man named Sölvi the son of Óláf lang.

Þorgils asked, "Where is that devil Hauk?"

Sölvi replied, "I don't know where he is, my good bóndi."

Þorgils struck him with the whip he was holding, and the blow was so powerful that he fell, his forehead striking the ground and his feet flying over his head. Þorgils' horse slid on the slippery ground but Þorgils jumped down and landed on his feet. Sölvi now tried to run away but Þorgils struck him a second blow with the whip so that he fell to his knees, supporting himself on his hands. Þorgils bade him tell him about Hauk if he now had any better idea.

But Sölvi ran off saying, "Don't strike me any more, bóndi mine, for I do not know where he is."

Gróa, the mistress of the house, came out and called to him,

"Þórð,[9] if you have any influence on them, don't let these men do any harm here."

Þorgils said, "Where is your husband Hauk?"

She replied, "It's not only true that I don't know but furthermore I wouldn't tell you if I did know."

A woman named Ragnhild now came out and Þorgils asked, "Do you know where Hauk is?"

"I think," the woman replied, "that he went out to Kóranes to see to his property."

Þorgils and his men rode there but Hauk was not there. When they returned to the homestead they were told that Hauk was in the church, but the mistress of the house and the priest were standing in front of the church doors. The mistress greeted Þorgils and invited him to stay. He said she was behaving politely. Gróa then asked for quarter for Hauk,

"And if he has said or done anything to displease you, I will spare nothing to help you reach a reconciliation."

Þorgils said that Hauk should not receive quarter unless he would accept the settlement which Þorgils wanted. Gróa asked if he wanted self-judgment, and Berg said, "The offence is hardly greater than can be met by compensation."

Þórð now said, "Where is there a better place to commit robbery than here, if it must be done somewhere, and is necessary?"

Gróa said, "Þórð's proposals are always the same."

Berg asked that Hauk himself offer self-judgment; Hauk did so and on these terms they reached a reconciliation. Þorgils stayed there overnight and their hospitality was gracious. In the morning it was raining hard; they invited Þorgils and his men to stay the day but he wanted to be off. Hauk asked him to pronounce the verdict in the case and said he would pay whatever Þorgils asked.

Þorgils said, "Mistress Gróa, I will now pronounce this verdict, but you may release yourself from it in any way you wish; then it cannot be considered compulsion."

They agreed to this condition. Hauk gave two *sálds*[10] worth of malt and one-and-a-half *sálds* of corn and in addition a large

axe which Þorleif of Garðar had given to Hauk. Gróa gave Þorgils a gold finger ring. They separated on friendly terms.

Þorgils rode away from there to Hítarnes, and from there to Snæfellsnes; he stayed with the more prominent bóndis who all gave him gifts. He and his kinsman Sturla Þórðarson met each other at Helgafel but their meeting was rather unfriendly. Sturla like all those who held land in Þórð kakali's name said they were deeply displeased with King Hákon's arrangements. Sturla wanted to draw Þorgils away from his allegiance to the king, but Þorgils wanted to pull Sturla out of his league with Hrafn and Eyjólf. The kinsmen parted with no friendliness.

From there Þorgils rode south to Stað and then south again to Reykjaholt. With him from the coast rode his brother Ingimund, his cousin Gunnlaug the priest, his sister Hallbera, Hallbjörn mikil and his son Björn—he was to be a steward[11] at Reykjaholt—Svein Ormsson and Svein Ívarsson, Þórð Hítnesing and Magnús gargan.

Egil bóndi had been on the other side of the Hvítá with his friends all the time Þorgils was in the west. He and his cousin Nikulás had met each other at Sámsstaðir, and after their conversation Egil had changed his mind about Þorgils. After the Feast of St. Martein there came south from Eyr Martein Ívarsson and Hall, the son of Pál the priest at Eyr. Earlier that spring there had been a battle west in the Dales[12] and Martein had killed Tanni Gunnlaugsson. Martein's brother Pál Ívarsson had also been slain there. Þorgils took in Martein on the priest Pál's word, but Martein was no freer for expeditions, inasmuch as confession and fasting had been enjoined upon him.

15

At the beginning of winter Klæng Skeggjason arrived from Síða in the east. He was sent by Abbot Brand north to Hólar to meet Bishop Heinrek; Klæng carried a letter from the abbot.[13] The letter said that he had chosen Þorgils to arbitrate together with Gizur Þorvaldsson about the slaying of Orm's sons, secondly, that he bade Þorgils act peacefully in the district and more wisely

than rumor reported; thirdly, that Snört of Selárdal had come from the West Fjords and told him that men said Hrafn Oddsson was very hostile to Þorgils, that Sturla was less a friend to him than he should be; and the abbot bade Þorgils be wary. Klæng rode away two nights after the Feast of St. Cecilía. Þórð Hítnesing rode with him to Hvamm in Norðrárdal and they spent the night there. In the evening Þorstein Gellisson, a homeman of Þorgils, arrived from the West Fjords. He had spent two nights at Staðarhól; he said that Hrafn had come there and that he and Sturla had talked with each other at great length. He said that they had spoken well of Þorgils and would be happy to come to an amicable understanding with him, and that they wanted to meet him on the second day of the week following the Feast Days,[14] at Hella west of Ámótsvað on the Hvítá. Þorstein had assurances of safe-conduct which he could give Þorgils for this meeting, and Þorgils was to give them a promise of safe-conduct in return. Each was to come with fifteen men altogether. In the course of the Holy Day Þorgils rode to the meeting with fourteen others. Each arrived at almost the same time and there were friendly greetings among the men. Hrafn, Sturla, Nikulás Oddsson, and Kolbein grön were there, fifteen altogether. The men tied their horses and sat down in the field. Hrafn was first to speak and asked about Þorgils' journeys and about the news from Norway. Sturla called out Þórð, saying he wanted to talk with him, and when they met Sturla asked how strong Þórð thought the friendship was between Gizur and Þorgils, or whether there was any use in trying to win Þorgils away from Gizur. Þórð said he thought there was no point in this and that Þorgils would never swerve from what he had promised the king, even though he did not do this for Gizur's sake.

"But some men say about you, Sturla bóndi," Þórð went on, "that it would be more fitting for you to maintain friendship and fellowship with your kinsman Þorgils than to pledge yourself to allegiance with those men who are not his friends."

Sturla answered, "We met in the autumn at Helgafel and could reach no understanding with each other about anything. Nor could I say that he did not reply with violence and antagonism.

Like his father he is obstinate by nature, but his disposition is worse."

Now they heard Hrafn and the others talking very loudly and Sturla ran over to them with his men. Þorgils and Nikulás were talking about the property which the latter had received from Snorri Sturluson's inheritance as dowry, with Gyða, and which Þorgils had been assigned to look after.

Hrafn said this property was of little value if it destroyed their friendship: "From his friendship with Gizur, Þorgils will reap nothing but shame and disaster, like the other Sturlungs—nor is it certain that we will have long to wait for this."

Þorgils told him not to threaten him, "But have a care, bóndi, that you do not steal my property, for that will not be well received. . . ;[15] I shall scarcely turn my back on you if we are even in numbers and equipment. What the king has assigned to me, whether it relates to authority or property, I intend to carry out to the best of my ability, no matter what power Hrafn and Nikulás wield."

Nikulás wound up by saying he would never let go the properties he controlled, no matter who laid claim to them, "unless Þórð kakali comes."

Hrafn and Sturla promised to support Nikulás and never desert him. The conversation now declined into threats and harsh words and most of the men suggested that they separate. Berg and Þórð suggested that Þorgils and Sturla should talk with each other and offered to be present. Þorgils said the man who showed him friendship would be his friend; the man who showed him kinship, his kinsman.

Berg then said, "It is remarkable to observe that such wise men as you do not see how wrong things are when everyone else can see it."

Sturla replied that the difficulties in their case which could not now be recognized might be clearer later on. Þorgils said he could look after himself quite well unless he were unjustly treated. Sturla said their talk was not going to lead to any solution, and men stood up and went for their horses. Hrafn and his men rode off first. Þorgils rode home to Reykjaholt; he

now felt certain that Hrafn and Sturla were hostile to him, but he did not think they meant to make an attack on him.

Þorgils remained at home now and had drink supplied for the Christmas season; but he kept spies out west of the Hvítá.

16

In the autumn a ship had come to the west into Dýrafjörð; the captains were a man named Klemet and one named Öndótt, a Shetlander and retainer of the king, known to Þorgils. During the winter Öndótt went south across the heath to demand a payment which Ketil Ketilsson owed him. He met Ketil at Kallaðarnes but did not get the payment, and he attributed this somewhat to Gizur. He put up at Reykjaholt when he traveled north again, spending some days there. He carried a letter to them which Önund the bishop's kinsman sent to Þorgils, his companion:[16]

"I have now sounded out Gizur's mind"—according to Þorgils' request in the autumn at Viðey—"and my advice is, my friend, that you maintain your friendship with Gizur but don't count on any loyalty in his friendship. However, I mean to speak only good of him, never ill; I believe he will think it good news when he hears that you have now broken with the men of the West Fjords."

Öndótt spoke at length about the men of the West Fjords. He had met Hrafn at Staðarhól when he came east—

"Hrafn had then come north from the meeting at Hella in Borgarfjörð, and I was at that time considered a man to be on one's guard against."

But, he said, he knew that Kolbein and Svarthöfði were sent to the West Fjords, and "it seemed to me," he went on, "as if everything was in a ferment in the west," although men were not calling up troops as far as he knew, "but about this I was certain—they were planning to do something harmful."

He told Þorgils to be as careful as possible, "for I know that Hrafn and Sturla were not at all pleased about you at Hella."

Öndótt rode away the third day of Ember Week. He had

promised Þorgils to send him information if he were aware of any disturbance. Tuesday afternoon Egil Sölmundarson returned home from the other side of the Hvítá. Egil was at that time very merry with everyone except Þorgils and Þórð: he did not speak to them nor did they to him. Wednesday, when services were over, Þorgils told his followers that during the day he meant to ride down to Stafaholt to meet his kinsman Óláf Þórðarson. While they were getting ready to be off, Þorstein Árnason from Síðumúli arrived at Reykjaholt, giving his business as the delivery of some russet wadmal cloth[17] which the priest Þorkel was sending to Þórð. Þorstein was there while they were getting ready and did not leave until they had gone so he knew about their journey, for no one was on his guard with him.

17

Þorgils and his men now rode until they reached Stafaholt, fourteen altogether. With Þorgils were Þórð Hítnesing, Berg Ámundason, Arnór Eiríksson, Þorstein Gellisson, Ingimund Þorgeirsson, Steingrím stjúp, Þorstein kuggi, Svein Ormsson, Svein Ívarsson, Hall Pálsson, Jón Ívarsson, and three lads who were to take care of the horses. They received a warm welcome and they drank together far into the night. They had hung their other weapons on the pegs for the wall-hangings in the hall, but their swords they took in with them. Everyone except Þorgils was without a byrnie.

The kinsmen Þorgils and Óláf had talked at length about all the rumors there were, but Óláf shrugged them aside. He said he would send a man on an errand to Staðarhól who could find out what was going on in the west, for "I do not believe that Sturla has anything to do with hostilities against you."

The three lads were now posted to keep watch. Þorgils' weapon was hanging by his head, but hardly anyone else's was, because it did not occur to anyone that he would need his weapon. The arrangement about the beds was such that Þorgils was in the middle of the room in a gable-bed[18] and Þórð lay next to him. This side of the partition were Berg and Þorstein Gellisson; on

the opposite side Ingimund Þorgeirsson and Magnús gargan had beds, and on the opposite side toward the hall were the two with the same name—Svein Ormsson and Svein Ívarsson; opposite them again, Steingrím stjúp and Þorstein kuggi. When the men came to bed they fell fast asleep.

During the night people were busy at Stafaholt, for the mistress of the house, with Björn Sigurðarson the steward, were at work brewing; they had the fire for heating the ale outside because they did not want to irritate the men with smoke. The doors were therefore wide open, for people were constantly going in and out. The weather was calm and it was bright moonlight, and one could ride across the ice both on the river and the moors. Some of Þorgils' men were awakened by hearing a loud din. Þórð heard the noise and woke Þorgils, saying he thought there were men riding outside. Þorgils woke up only partially and said the lads must be riding the horses down to the water; he at once fell asleep again. A little later they heard a loud and prolonged noise of riding through the enclosure and thereupon such a noise rang all about that the very house seemed to shake.

Someone called in through the hall-window for Þorgils and his men to wake up, "Because men have ridden up to the homestead with their weapons drawn, and I think it must be an attack."

Þórð now woke Þorgils in earnest and told him a host of men had ridden in. Þorgils bade his men jump up at once and take hold of their weapons; he himself leapt up immediately. But they got tangled up with their clothes because it was dark inside. At this moment those who were attacking ran into the hall cursing and shouting, making their entrance through the door near the church. Þorgils called out to his men to be as quiet as possible while they were dressing; Þorgils got hold of one cloth and one leather hose; Þórð got two leather hose without feet. Þorgils got a green kirtle while Þórð got a jacket. Men now seized their weapons. Þórð pulled down a shield which was hanging above the bed and gave it to Þorgils. Þórð then got his hands on a steel helmet and recognized that it belonged to Þorgils. Þorgils had drawn his sword and had it standing

beside him while he dressed. Men now ran into the room from the other side; Berg shouted through a hole in the partition between the beds, "Þorgils! I think it's your kinsman Sturla who's here!"

Hrafn spoke first, so that they could hear him: "It will be best now if those who held their heads highest at the Hella meeting and spoke threateningly stepped forward and did not hide."

Þorgils replied, "If you are looking for me I have no intention of hiding, but I must ask whether I and my men will receive quarter or not. And what do you mean by breaking in here with such noise and tumult?"

Hrafn replied, "I cannot promise quarter to you or to many of your men; is that devil Martein Ívarsson here?'

"Martein is not here," said Þorgils, "but I do not deny that some devils have come in among us."

A light was now brought into the room and Þorgils said, "Is Sturla Þórðarson here?"

"I am here," said Sturla, "though I am somewhat hard to recognize."

Sturla now moved past the beds and into the women's quarters. Þorgils said, "Will you grant quarter, Sturla, to me and my men?"

Hrafn said at once, "Sturla is not the one to decide about quarter here. But you shall have the same quarter you intended for your kinsman Sturla."

At this Óláf Þórðarson jumped up and said, "You will both find, Hrafn and Sturla, and all those in your company, that I mean to repay all the dishonor you have done to the see and to me with all the fury I can command. I shall pray to Almighty God and to the Holy Bishop Nikulás, to whom this see belongs, to wreak vengeance on your crimes. And it seems to me that it would be more fitting, Sturla, for you to defend Þorgils' bed with your armed force than to stand where you are now standing."

Sturla replied, "I know you want to establish peace, but this is not now the first thing to be considered."

Nikulás and Kolbein had now come into the sleeping-chamber and up to the hammocks,[19] and Nikulás said, "Kolbein and I will offer quarter to Berg and to my lord's retainer Arnór."

Arnór promptly accepted this, but Berg said he would only accept quarter if it were granted to Þorgils, not otherwise.

Hrafn said, "I will grant quarter to Þorstein Gellisson and to Ingimund Þorgeirsson."

They accepted this thankfully. Þorgils asked Hrafn and Sturla what reason they could give him for such great hostility; Hrafn said the reason was that Þorgils had promised King Hákon to kill his kinsman Sturla and win his realm for himself.

Þorgils said this was not true: "I do not know which is more unlikely, that King Hákon would impose such a villainous task upon me or that I would agree to do it."

Hrafn said he was audacious in denying this, and added, "There are witnesses here," naming Kolbein and Ari Ingimundarson. Þorgils asked whether Kolbein and Ari would support Hrafn, and they replied that they would say what they had said before. Berg, Arnór and many of Þorgils' men denied the statement, claiming it was a very great lie, no matter who said it, and was furthermore quite a meaningless statement.

Þorgils broke in, "You mean to make the decision."

Hrafn said, "That is the way it will turn out now in respect of a truce. If you defend yourself, it is certain you will not be granted quarter; but if you give yourself into Sturla's hands and mine, and let us arrange and settle everything between us, then we will determine your penalty as suits us."

"One thing is quite certain," said Þorgils. "I will never give you self-judgment, Hrafn, or you, Sturla, or any other man in Iceland, while King Hákon is alive. I will submit our whole case to the king's judgment."

They rejected this at once and Þorgils said, "I see that our defense and our armed preparations will come to nothing as long as we two stand alone here with fully armed men on both sides."

And with these words he immediately threw his weapons up into the bed and jumped from his sleeping-place into the throng of men on the floor. They seized him at once. Hrafn and Sturla

now told him to go into the little room with his men, and Sturla asked why Þórð did not move. He said he would not go until he had dressed. Hrafn asked Þórð to go to the little room then, so Þórð began to dress and was then led out to the room. Those of Þorgils' men who already had their clothes on were led out. Hrafn told Þorstein Gellisson to come into the main room into which Hrafn and Sturla now moved and set about their deliberations while the little room was locked. It was light in the room but very cold and they sat there a long time before anyone came in to them. Þorgils lay down but could not get to sleep. Þórð spoke to him, asking him why he was so downcast.

"I was thinking," replied Þorgils, "how little I should like it if there were no saga about me, before the end of my life, if I could not take revenge for the dishonor now done to me."

Þórð said, "Put such thoughts out of your mind. Do what you think right if you are given your life, but if you are to die now it will be better for you the less you have to answer for."

"I am not afraid to die," said Þorgils.

Þórð said that most of those who were with Þorgils would so suffer in the event of his death that everyone would feel shame both for Þorgils and for himself. Þorgils said this would be true.

18

Guttorm Þórðarson now came into the room. He looked heavy-hearted and was breathing deeply when he sat down. Þorgils greeted him and asked what he knew of the chieftains' deliberations. He said he had a grave report, that he thought it rather likely they would not grant quarter to Þorgils, "And I await the dark day when Þorgils will be killed. At the same time I shall lose the man I think most of after Þorgils if this wicked deed is carried through."

He observed to his brother Sturla: "They all talked at the same time as to what settlement Þorgils might accept, or whether he would go to Norway and never return if he had that choice."

Þorgils answered, "Who will then avenge my dishonor? But this will not come to pass, for I will lay my bones here in Iceland," he said, "either now or another time."

A little later Dufgus' sons Kolbein and Svarthöfði came into the room and sat down; they said that Hrafn and Sturla had sent them to Þorgils to find out what terms Þorgils would accept, whether he would purchase his life by moving with them against Gizur and pledge himself to this faithfully. Þorgils said the only way he would buy his life was by actions that brought him neither shame nor dishonor. With this they went away and told Hrafn and Sturla how things stood.

When they had gone Þórð began to speak; "My advice, Þorgils, is that you save your life any way you can. Everything else is easier to buy than life. If you are granted quarter you do not need to fulfill more of this agreement, made under compulsion, than you think right; and no one knows what may happen later on in your affairs."

All of Þorgils' men urged him to accept such a settlement if he had a chance. A long time now passed before Óláf Þórðarson came into the room, with Kolbein and Svarthöfði Dufgusson and Guttorm kört.

Óláf said: "I have been talking with Hrafn and Sturla, and I want you now to yield to my entreaty and accept the choice which will avert the worst difficulties. You should remember how many and what great disgraces you have Gizur to thank for, primarily the slaying of Snorri Sturluson which we all ought to avenge if we can. It is equally true that Gizur has killed the greatest part of our family. But even if you are still so stubborn that you will not listen to anyone's advice, you will be serving Gizur but poorly if you are killed here and things thus turn out for Gizur as he wishes. The most advantageous choice offered you is to join with them in this march against Gizur and to stand unfailingly on their side in every circumstance of this expedition. After this they will make you honorable reparation, even as we see fit, when you return."

Þorgils replied, "It would be rather a rash choice to expose myself to such great danger along with them, and yet have only this uncertain assumption about the reward."

Óláf said, "You are difficult to advise as to a way out, kinsman! But choose the course which will lead to the least harm."

Many supported Óláf in this and urged Þorgils to save his life by these means. Þorgils bade them tell Hrafn and Sturla that they should come out to him if they wanted to add to the conversation, "For I don't believe I am so frightened that I can't both see and hear them."

Hrafn and Sturla were now sent for and in a short time came out with a very large group of men. With Hrafn and Sturla were Vigfús Gunnsteinsson, Nikulás Oddsson, Einar Þorvaldsson, Svarthöfði and Kolbein Dufgusson, and as many other men as the room would hold. When it was quiet Óláf outlined what messages he had carried between them and asked what they thought about them. They said he had delivered nothing that was not true and Óláf said, "Then for the love of God act so that each of you can give way to the other."

Nikulás said, "Do you know for a certainty, Óláf, that it would be better if the case came to a head at another time?"

Kolbein then said: "This is my request: all those men here who want to increase hostility may do one of two things—go away or else keep still; for I think that every good suggestion is needed here if things are to turn out well."

Guttorm said, "Grievous will it be if we do any wrong to our blameless kinsmen, while that man goes free whose hostility you all ought to requite."

This seemed to many well taken. Þorgils now demanded that Hrafn and Sturla state what choice they would offer him and Hrafn said:

"Sturla bóndi, things must not go as they did during the night, so that I have to be responsible for answers and for actions. You must now be as firm in both respects as I am, and not say things were done without your consent, whether what is done is good or bad."

Sturla said, "Óláf has said that you and I are in agreement."

Þorgils rejected their proposal of an agreement and Hrafn, Sturla, and Óláf now conferred. When they finished their talk Sturla said, "The matter now stands thus, Þorgils my kinsman: we have decided on an agreement which is the utmost we can grant. The first condition of this is that you join us at once, with

your followers, in moving against Gizur. We will make a pact with you, bind it by oath, and never break it until death divides us—if war does not first divide us. If we win anything each of us is to have one third of it, and we will not disperse our troops until we have won either reparation or death."

Þorgils replied: "This agreement would be worth considering if I would not be violating my oath to the king, and if I were offered full reward for joining the attack. Gizur is not so dearly loved by me that I could not persuade myself to do this, nor are we bound to each other by oaths."

Men now worked to bring the reconciliation to some conclusion; primarily Óláf Þórðarson, Berg, Þórð, the sons of Dufgus and many others worked for this end. Reconciliation was achieved and sworn to by oaths from Hrafn, Sturla, and Þorgils. Afterwards they went off to make ready for their expedition, all of them thinking that they had been held up here too long. Þorgils asked Hrafn and Sturla if they would let him ride home to Reykjaholt in order to make his preparations there and then ride from there across Bláskógaheið. They were somewhat reluctant about this but gave him permission.

Þorgils then rode home to Reykjaholt. As he came up to Ámótsvað his horse fell dead beneath him. They got Þorgils across the river and he obtained another horse and with his men rode home into Reykjaholt, where Egil welcomed Þorgils warmly, "It is good that you are safe home."

Þorgils went to church. Egil and Eyvind bratt asked news of Þorgils' journey and he readily told them how matters stood, that he had to ride at once to the south across Bláskógaheið that evening for he was sworn to their expedition against Gizur. Egil was very pleased with this report, as was Eyvind; Þorgils and his men now went to eat. Egil and the priest Gunnlaug had the horses shod with whatever they could get; Egil found something, weapons or clothes or horseshoes, for all of Þorgils' men except Þorgils and Þórð. When they had eaten their fill Þorgils and Þórð went to the baths, for the horses were not yet ready. While they were sitting in the baths Þorgils said, "What is your advice, Þórð, as to whether I should keep the agreement?"

Þórð asked what course he saw ahead if he did not keep the agreement.

"Nothing," said Þorgils, "but to ride north to Bishop Heinrek."

Þórð asked whether he thought he would be violating his oath to King Hákon if he kept the agreement. Þorgils said he certainly would be violating the oath.

"It seems to me more necessary," said Þórð, "for you to keep the oath you swore to the king, in honor, than to save your life by a forced agreement."

"Then," said Þorgils, "I choose to ride north to the bishop."

They agreed on this decision before they left the baths. They dressed, took their weapons, and found the horses ready. Two men, Eyjólf slopp and Þorkel, rode always in the front of the horses while they rode behind. When they had ridden up from the enclosure Þorgils called out to Berg and told him his decision. Berg was pleased with it, saying they had much more mind for this expedition than for an attack on Gizur. When they came up by Breiðabólsstað Þorgils ordered his men to halt and they did. Þorgils now told them of his decision and his men were pleased to hear it. He sent Þorkel raunarmað south over Bláskógaheið to inform Hrafn and Sturla that there was no prospect of his joining them, and that he was withdrawing from the forced agreement. Þorkel then rode off.

19

Þorgils and his men now rode up along Reykjardal. They reached Húsafel where everyone was asleep. Þorgils had men knock on the door and call out Sigmund the priest, who greeted Þorgils and invited him to stay there. But Þorgils wanted to ride on and so bade Sigmund find them a man who knew the way across Tvídægra. Sigmund said he had no one who knew the way, "And why are you traveling by night?"

Þorgils told Sigmund about the attack and asked him to give them some advice about a guide. Sigmund explained to him about the way to Reyðarfel,

"And there is a man there," he said, "who is familiar with

all the routes to the north. This man's name is Sighvat Steingrímsson, a very swift-footed man, in the prime of life."

They rode off then and came to Reyðarfel. Sighvat joined them on their expedition at the urging of Þuríð, Skeggi's daughter and Sölmund's mistress. They went on until they reached Kalmanstunga where Nikulás Oddsson had a homestead. They rapped on the door and a man named Þórhall came out. Þorgils asked if Gyða were at home and he said he did not have to reply. Þorgils struck him on the head with his small axe so that he was wounded in the scalp. He jumped backward, shouting that he had been wounded. Gyða now came out through the door and offered Þorgils whatever help he wanted.

Þorgils said, "I have not come here to eat a meal, and furthermore Nikulás deserves more harm from me than I intend to inflict on him at this time."

"I ask only this of you, kinsman," said Gyða, "that you do not let us be robbed or the property wantonly destroyed, but take from us whatever provisions you think you need, with my full authority."

"That will be the best course this time," said Þorgils, "and for your sake that is what we will do."

Þorgils and Gyða now parted on friendly terms. They rode on their way with one horse laden with hay, until they came down into Gnúpsdal on Friday evening just as it was growing dark. They rested their horses as soon as they gave them hay. Some of their horses had gone lame; Arnór had a lame horse, one Egil had given him, and wanted to roam off down through the district to make some exchanges for horses, but Þorgils wanted to ride on north across the upper ridge.

Sighvat stayed behind now and Þorgils thanked him for his company, took a gold ring from his finger and gave it to Sighvat, bidding him look him up later if ever he needed anything. Þorgils rode north across the ridge in to Víðidal. On Saturday morning they reached Tunga where Jón received them warmly; they at once lay down to sleep. They spent the day there, attended Mass, and ate their dinner. That was on the Feast of

St. Tómas. In the evening they rode off and Jón járnbúk also struck out on the expedition with them.

That evening they rode to Svínavatn where Kolþerna Einar's daughter lived and where they received a very good welcome. Then they made ready to go on, but Þórð said he would not ride any further until he heard some news of Arnór, so the company stayed there on Sunday. At noontime Arnór arrived but had no news from the area south of the heath.

From there they rode on until they came to Víðimýr in the evening; they were well received here and stayed the night. They attended services here on the Feast of St. Þorlák and fasted during the day. From there they rode to Ás and decided to eat their day's meal there. Árni bóndi was willing to give them their meal but told them they themselves would have to answer for its being allowed them, "For, do you wish to have meat or not?"

They said they would like to and they did. When they had eaten their fill they rode up to Hólar and arrived at the moment the bishop was going to Evensong. They and the bishop met in front of the church doors. Þorgils greeted the bishop and he received Þorgils graciously, inviting him and all his men to stay as long as they wished. Not only did the bishop not ask about anything but nothing was reported to him. But when the bishop went into the church tower Þormóð Grímsson went up to him and spoke privately. The bishop then asked Þorgils if any of his men had broken their fast.

"None last evening," said Þorgils.

"You certainly won't eat meat this evening?" the bishop asked.

"We have already eaten meat today," said Þorgils.

The bishop said, "Þormóð, get them some good thick meat," and he went on into Evensong.

When Evensong was over the bishop and Þorgils went up into the hall. Þorgils now told the bishop all the reasons for his coming there, and when they came to the end of their talk Þorgils went to eat but the bishop went to bed. They enjoyed the best of hospitality and the next morning their horses were taken care of. The bishop was very friendly, and so the day passed. The guests —Broddi, a bóndi from Hof, Einar faxi, and Jón Skíðason—had

now arrived. On Christmas Day at early service the bishop went up into the chancel and preached about the Nativity. When he had finished he spoke about Þorgils' coming and about all the events which had occurred, declaring that Hrafn and Sturla and everyone who supported them were traitors.[20] He now declared them excluded from Holy Church and put them under interdict, but said that he himself would put off their excommunication until he knew of more harm from their expedition. The bishop said that all those men, "who wish to follow my word in any way are to stand by Þorgils if he needs any help."

Broddi received Þorgils warmly. On Christmas Day the bishop arranged places for the men: he put Þorgils on the daïs next to himself, and then as many of his men as the bench would hold. Visiting the bishop at that time were Eystein hvíti with his wife Jórun, and Aron Hjörleifsson. Eystein sat opposite the bishop, with the other guests next to him.

21

First it is to be reported now that the bishop invited Þorgils and all his company to stay there through Christmas. Þorgils did nothing the first day of Christmas and the second. Early on the third day of Christmas he rode up to Flugumýr, and on the fourth day of Christmas a meeting was called there. The men of the district came; the bishop was also present and told the district-men all about Þorgils' expedition. Broddi told men to keep in mind the affection they had for Kolbein ungi and claimed to have heard often that men wanted as their chieftain someone from Kolbein's family.

"And this," he said, "is now a possibility."

They talked at length about this and came to the conclusion that for the time being no decision was possible. Þorgils then sent spies west to Miðfjörð and south as far as Reykjaholt. After this meeting came to an end Þorgils remained three days at Flugumýr, and then rode out to Hólar where he stayed quietly. There was much drinking and feasting.

On the seventh day of Christmas the priest Gunnlaug, Þorgils'

cousin, came north from Reykjaholt; with him were Ingimund Böðvarsson and Svein Ívarsson. Þorgils received them warmly, for he was very eager to hear the news. A place for Gunnlaug was arranged by Broddi, but when the bishop knew that he was married and yet was a priest he was not at all pleased and Gunnlaug was almost refused permission to attend church until Þorgils spoke up for him. A little later Þorgils and his men went up into the hall with Gunnlaug the priest. Bishop Heinrek was already there. Gunnlaug was asked to report on Hrafn's and Sturla's expedition and he began his story at the point when Þorgils had left them.

Hrafn and Sturla had ridden south over Bláskógaheið until they came south of Hallbjarnarvörð, where they dismounted and waited for Þorgils far into the night, until the messenger arrived from Þorgils to say that he was not to be expected. Hrafn and all his men had leapt up and there was a great uproar among the company; some asserted that Þorgils had betrayed them while others excused him, saying that this was exactly what could have been expected. Everyone laid the blame on one or another chieftain, but most of them grumbled against Sturla.

Sturla spoke little in reply, but in the hearing of some said that even if he had known before that things would turn out this way he would still rather have made this choice than have been party to the killing of his kinsman Þorgils, knowing that there certainly would never again be such a man. Vigfús said things had turned out as he guessed, but Nikulás said, "I think that since Þorgils has slipped away this time . . ." and added that they would suffer more harm from him before their differences were at an end.

Hrafn said he wanted one thing or another: either they should not pick a quarrel with Þorgils or they should recognize him as a threat; but, he added, Sturla was guilty on both counts. Sturla now told everyone to speak as he wished, "For we won't get on very far by wasting time on such comments as this."

They had now asked Þorkel about Þorgils' route and he said he thought Þorgils would have ridden out of the district.

Hrafn said, "Where did you leave him?"

Þorkel said, "Up above Breiðabólsstað."

"And then where did he go?" asked Hrafn.

"Up through Reykjardal," said Þorkel.

Some of the men now said this would all lead to disaster; some said Þorkel should be whipped; some said he ought to join them; some declared they ought to collect their horses, and that they had already stayed there too long. While this uproar was at its height and men were preparing to leave as soon as they could, Þorkel took to his heels and went west across the heath, never stopping until he reached Reykjaholt.

Sturla and Hrafn had sent spies ahead but rode with their company as swiftly as they could. The skies now began to darken and there was a beating rain, a severe storm with gales of wind. They rode until they came down into Stýfingadal by Ölfusvatn. Their spies came up to meet them and reported that the ice was high in the Ölfusá and that it could nowhere be crossed, so they decided to turn back. The storm was unabated and many of the men were so completely exhausted that they could do nothing; everyone helped someone else as long as he was able to do so. They dragged themselves back west across the heath and thus the men saved their lives but were in a most wretched condition.

On Sunday afternoon Hrafn and Sturla reached Reykjaholt. They disposed their men throughout the homestead and there were almost thirty men in Reykjaholt. Egil bóndi received them with open arms. They stayed there through St. Þorlák's Day and feasted. They received definite news that Þorgils had ridden north to Tvídægra and had a good journey, because the man who had gone with him had now returned. On the day before Christmas Hrafn rode across Norðrá in Skarð but Sturla rode to Stafaholt. At the beginning of Christmas they rode out of the district and the men of the area felt they had been invaders. They rode to the west and Sturla went home, but Hrafn was a visitor at Sturla's in Staðarhól and Sauðafel. Their company rode on to the West Fjords where it dispersed, ill pleased with their expedition.

Thus Gunnlaug ended his report.

21

Þorgils remained quietly at Hólar, greatly honored. He had spies out west of Vatnsskarð. The bishop spoke often of how glad he was that they had not got Þorgils in their hands and thanked God for this. Christmas now drew on until the twelfth day with great cheer and diversion, nor was there any shortage of the best in drink and other good things. On Twelfth Night while the bishop was at Evensong a man came into the church. He was entirely covered with snow; he was a short, bald man, rather unsteady in his walk. When he entered the church, Þorgils said to Þórð, "That is my kinsman Loðin Sigurðarson."

Þorgils went over to him and embraced him while Evensong was being completed. But when the men came back into the hall they took off Loðin's clothing and that of his companions, Bárð kamp and another man named Auðólf. Loðin brought the bishop and also Þorgils greetings from Gizur and reported that Gizur was well and in a good state of mind. He reported also about Hrafn's and Sturla's expedition, just as Gunnlaug had done, adding that Gizur had been forewarned so that they could not have captured him even if the river had been passable. Loðin had a letter for the bishop and for Þorgils in which was expressed the deepest friendship for them both. Loðin was a good friend of Gizur but an implacable enemy of the men from the west. The bishop was entreated to help in bringing the Skagafirðings into allegiance to Gizur, but when Þorgils learned of this his mind was straightway set against Gizur. But he did not want to say this openly to the bishop.

Þorgils spoke of this to his companion Aron who suggested that Þorgils should ride before each man's door with thirty men,[21] but this Þorgils refused to do.

On the thirteenth day of Christmas there was a splendid feast and a great deal of drinking, and Þorgils' men became very drunk. After Christmas Broddi and the other guests rode away. He invited Þorgils out to Hof for a feast on Geisla Day[22] and Þorgils rode out there with nine others. They enjoyed a splendid feast and there was a rather large company both on the Sunday and the Monday. On Monday night when men had

been asleep for a while there was a knocking on the door, rather loud. A man went to the door and there stood Steingrím stjúp, come from Hólar, who said that Þorgils' spies had returned from the west and reported that Hrafn and Sturla meant to come east to Langadal with three hundred men during the safety of Sunday, and that it was further reported that Hrani and Eyjólf could also be expected to come. Þorgils sprang up and dressed but they were somewhat late in making ready, for their horses were at other homesteads for fodder and men had to fetch them. Þorgils now conferred with Broddi who suggested that they send word throughout the whole district to call up men. Broddi sent a message to Sæmundarhlíð to Pál Kolbeinsson and a second to Einar faxi, bidding him call up men in Blönduhlíð. The bishop had a man sent up to Tunga. All the troops from these places were to gather at Flugumýr, and the bishop also promised them the support of all his armed men from the sees. Þorgils now rode in on Tuesday to collect men from Höfðaströnd and then rode in through Kolbeinsdal. They gathered there in the evening and altogether numbered almost four hundred.

Aron and Ingimund arrived and said that a man had come from the west in Langadal and reported that Hrafn had not yet arrived there, that there were no troops mustered, and that there was no news of Hrafn. Men were now sent west to Vatnsskarð. The bóndis asked leave to go home, and it was decided that they were to defend the district if this was necessary, but never leave the district. Aron Hjörleifsson had mounted his horse and now rode over to Þorgils, saying,

"I intend to ride in one direction or another, west or east. And it would be much closer to my way of thinking if we were to ride north against Hrani and strike down that fiend before they join forces with each other, than to turn and face them when they come from the west."

"I don't think it is quite that simple," said Þorgils, "if the bóndis aren't to leave the district."

Aron said, "I never expected you would be a coward, Þorgils, but I can tell you this—I won't leave the see during the winter

however badly you need me unless I get something to do now."

He wheeled his horse around and said he meant to ride away.

"You have spoken harshly to me, I think," said Þorgils, "but since I know you were jesting and not in earnest I shall take your words in jest."

Their troops now dispersed but everyone promised to be ready for action if he were needed. Then some asked Þorgils to ride away from the district, for they thought they would not be attacked if he were not there.

Þorgils and his men now rode to Heggstaðir.[23] There Þorgils, Broddi and some others talked with the bishop. The bishop had now changed his mind and wanted to try to effect a reconciliation between Hrafn, Sturla, and Þorgils, and many men supported this. The bishop offered to go south to Borgarfjörð and call a meeting. Þorgils agreed to this on condition that he keep the district in Borgarfjörð, and that the bishop choose one of Þorgils' men to join his company, so he chose Þórð. They rode to Hólar and swiftly made ready. Eystein hvíti and some of his other homemen went with the bishop.

22

The bishop rode to Flugumýr where he spent the night in his homestead, and Þorgils was with him. Þorgils rode with him to Vatnsskarð and then turned back. The bishop and his group found the rivers impassable because of a great thaw. They put up at Stað in Hrútsfjörð the night before the Feast of St. Pál. Jón járnbúk came to meet him there. From there they sent Hrafn snati and Þorstein Gellisson to Hrafn and Sturla, with the message that the bishop wanted to meet with them in Borgarfjörð.

On the Feast of St. Pál there was a heavy fall of snow and it was very dark. Jón járnbúk rode ahead as guide. They reached Hvamm in Norðrárdal by evening and spent the night there, and the following day the bishop rode on to Reykjaholt where men welcomed him to the best of their ability. The bishop sent a messenger to Abbot Brand in Skálaholt saying he was to come north as fast as possible. Hrafn and Sturla now came east as far

as Ámótsvað; they invited the bishop to come there for Candlemass if the weather was clear, otherwise they would wait for him at Hella. They would bring fifteen men to the meeting and the bishop was also not to have more than fifteen. As many of the bóndis could come as wanted to. Almost all the snow now melted, there was a prolonged thaw and the rivers were swollen. But at Candlemass the weather was entirely clear and the bishop conducted divine service most punctiliously.

The men who were ready now rode off, among them Egil bóndi and many other bóndis from the district. They rode down to Ámótsvað and the river was rather high, but when they had crossed the river the others had not yet come.

23

A little later the others arrived and rode up on to the heath a short distance from where the bishop had dismounted. Sturla sent Svart Þórisson to Þórð asking him to meet him under a safe-conduct, and when they met they asked if he would swear that Þorgils was nowhere in the vicinity, and so could do no harm there that day. Þórð said he certainly would not swear to it, but he could say that Þorgils was not planning any treachery.

"Nor is he nearer than Skagafjörð."

Hrafn retorted that one could trust nothing Þórð said and it must all be lies.

Sturla said, "What he is saying is true, for treachery is not in the nature of Þorgils or his kinsmen."

They now turned their horses loose and went up to the bishop; they removed their steel hats and greeted him, but he remained silent. Men then sat down and asked for the news; they began to talk about their business and asked the bishop what conditions for a reconciliation he would offer on Þorgils' behalf. They said they themselves would make no offer but would see if the bishop offered anything:

"For it is you who summoned us to this meeting, not we who summoned you."

The bishop received this statement unsympathetically:

"I summon you," he said, "as breakers of the peace in opposition to the king's servant."

They bade him bring forward the peace offer on Þorgils' behalf or else say who would present this. The bishop replied that Þórð was to present the peace offer in Þorgils' name, and Þórð said that the offer of peace on Þorgils' behalf was that he wished to have and to retain in peace and freedom Borgarfjörð and all those areas which the king had assigned to him. Furthermore he wanted a judgment on the six men for the Stafaholt expedition, and they were all to agree to this judgment, each side equal in number. They answered that there could be no question of their giving up Borgarfjörð or those other areas which Þórð had granted them unless a letter from him came to them, and they declared they wanted no king's hand governing their districts.

Eystein said: "You would not dare to say this if you were as near the king as you now are to the bishop. The most suitable settlement is for you to submit everything to the king's authority and both of you go to Norway."

They flatly rejected this, saying, "You won't effect a reconciliation between men, Eystein, even though you are considered a good bargainer. Þorleif has authority over the district with our full consent."

A great deal of talk now followed. Suddenly men were seen riding along the Hvítá from the south—not fewer than twelve men altogether, weapons flashing. Various guesses were offered: some thought it must be Þorleif from Garðar; some thought it must be the bóndis of the district; and some thought it might be Þorgils Böðvarsson. Then men came swiftly forward and it turned out to be Abbot Brand, Böðvar from Bær, and other bóndis. There were friendly greetings between the bishop and the abbot, then the abbot sat down immediately while the bishop reported to him how the negotiations stood. The abbot said that it would be most fitting for Hrafn and Sturla to grant Þorgils an honorable settlement, considering how badly and shamefully they had broken the peace with him at Stafaholt. They replied that he had broken the peace in their district, thrashed the bóndis or used force against them, and had not given compen-

sation for anything. The abbot said that was wrong and that compensation must be given, but to those against whom injury had been done, not to those who now demanded it.

The bóndi Böðvar said: "It was certainly true that Þorgils behaved harshly to some bóndis, but he himself had not met with any good will."

The more they continued the negotiations the further they were from a reconciliation.

Hrafn said, "I didn't expect such comments from you, Böðvar."

"Just as it is now clear," replied Böðvar, "that some have betrayed Þorgils, so I think there are also men who were always bent on betraying him if they could."

Hrafn and his companions now sprang up and asked if they had decided to give up the idea of a reconciliation. The bishop said it had ended in his having nothing more to suggest.

Sigurð soll was in Hrafn's and Sturla's company; Þórð recognized the sword which Sigurð was wearing as the one which he had lost at Stafaholt and asked him to give it up. Þórð reached for the sword but Sigurð hung on and each of them tugged at it. When the men saw this Kolbein Dufgusson went over and said he wanted Sigurð to let it go. Sigurð said Kolbein was not going to decide this. Hrafn and Sturla now went over and told Sigurð to give up the sword and not quarrel about such a thing:

"For you know very well it is not yours."

Sigurð asked Hrafn if he should give it up and Hrafn said, "I don't care in the least whether you give it up or not."

Þórð and those with him tugged at the sword until the tongue of the buckle on the sword-strap broke apart and the sword came free. Sigurð held on to the scabbard; Þórð snatched the sword from the sheath and Jón járnbúk took hold of it, but the others held on to the sheath. At this moment Abbot Brand and Böðvar came up; the abbot ordered them not to fight about something which was worth so little, adding, "You, Sigurð, will not want to cause such disaster as you did earlier."

Kolbein grasped Sigurð's arm above the elbow and Sigurð now let the scabbard fall from his hand. Hrafn said with some

scorn to Þórð: "You would have been rewarded with this later on."

Þórð said this would not have happened, and both sides now went for their horses; they parted on hostile terms.

The bishop had come on horseback. The Hvíta was very high and they did not want the bishop to ride with extended stirrups as he had earlier for they thought he would get far too wet. The bishop rode a horse owned by Egil of Reykjaholt; on either side of him rode Jón járnbúk and Böðvar of Bær, Jón on the side next to the river and Böðvar on the downstream side. Egil and Eirík birkibein were riding in the lead. The water came up on the horses' flanks; the bishop slid in the saddle and could not keep his seat unless they held him firmly on the horse's back—in this way they struggled to land. Eindriði of Rauðsgil and Sigurð of Kálfanes were swept off their horses but were rescued. When the bishop came up from the river he said he would never again ride in such dangerous waters.

The bishop and the abbot rode into Reykjaholt, where the services for the Feast of St. Blasíus were held and the abbot preached. He touched on the ban the bishop had laid on Hrafn and Sturla, saying that he would promote and support it in every respect, but that a priest would confess them if they would grant Þorgils reasonable terms, after which they would have a right to attend church from Maundy Thursday to the time of the Alþing. On the Feast of St. Blasíus the bishop and the abbot rode up to Gilsbakki and from there the bishop rode on to the north. The abbot rode back to Bær and south from there. Þórð rode home to Hítarnes while Hrafn and Sturla rode to the western settlements.

24

When the bishop reached Hólar he told Þorgils about his expedition and men thought little had come of his mission. The bishop was on very friendly terms with Þorgils, as he had been before. But it was rumored among the men that Þorgils' sojourn there seemed very costly, and when Þorgils heard this he made ready to depart.

Þórð had written a letter to Þorgils to tell him the abbot invited him to his home at Skálaholt and thought he would do better to be in Skálaholt than in Skagafjörð. He now rode south. He and the bishop parted on friendly terms and he promised him his friendship. He thanked the bishop many times over for all his assistance. Þorgils now rode across Arnarvatnsheið to Reykjaholt and sent a man to Þórð at Hítarnes, but Þórð had ridden to Stað. When Þórð did not come at the time Þorgils had stated, Þorgils rode south to Skálaholt with eleven men. The abbot welcomed him with unusual warmth; they stayed there for the spring and enjoyed the best of hospitality. Þorgils had said that Þórð should come to him in Skálaholt at the latest after Easter Week, for he wanted him and the priest Gunnlaug to buy three hundreds worth of provisions for the household at Reykjaholt. They did so. Everything was quiet then until the end of Easter Week. After this Þórð rode south with Ingimund Böðvarsson; when they moved south from the heath it began to snow, and the snowfall was so heavy that the horses could not push through. They did not trust to getting across Lyngdalsheið but turned toward Gjábakki and, utterly exhausted, reached Brú in the evening. They asked for food but got none. Then they got a faggot of hay for each horse and lay down under the fence encircling the homestead, so that the bóndi had to shut the gate carefully. The moment it was sunrise they went on; the weather was now clear. They reached Búrfel where they heard Mass and had their main meal; in the evening they rode to Skálaholt.

Þorgils was then in the bath but came in a little later and welcomed them warmly. He and the abbot had just come home from the east from a meeting to arrange a reconciliation about the slaying of Sæmund and Guðmund Ormsson. Þorgils told Þórð he was to ride west to Stað and make arrangements for the household, for he intended to move there during Removing Days; but Þórð said Böðvar's circumstances did not seem to him at all promising. When the abbot learned of this he spoke earnestly against the move and invited him to stay on with him until the time of the Alþing.

Þorgils thanked him sincerely for his offer but said, "Nevertheless I mean to ride west; I do not intend," he said, "to hide from Hrafn and Sturla any longer."

Þórð now rode to Þingvellir and the following day to Reykjaholt. During the night there was a great storm. Þórð said that Þorgils would not buy provisions for the household until Removing Days. Egil did not like this, and he and Þórð were not on good terms now. The household broke up then: Gunnlaug rode west across the heath with Hallbera, while Aldís, the daughter of Sigmund from Húsafel, went home to her father. Ingimund Böðvarsson accompanied Þorgils and the whole company that followed Þorgils also rode away now. Þórð and Egil parted from each other on unfriendly terms. As soon as he reached home Þórð went to Stað and told Böðvar about Þorgils' plan. Bödvar was pleased with it. Kolgrím in Bjarnarhöfn gave five cow-gilds[24] toward Þorgils' establishment. Þórð called a meeting at Stað and proposed that each bóndi who was in a position to do so should make a loan to Þorgils in the amount of one cow-gild. The men agreed to this happily and thought it a good idea for Þorgils to come to Stað. Shortly afterwards Þorgils arrived from the south. He and the abbot had parted from one another with much affection and he gave Þorgils a five-year-old ox and a quilt.

Þorgils got land for Gunnlaug at Hítarnes and he went to live there, but Þórð and Aldís went to Stað where she managed the household and Þorgils got a place for them at Þorgeirsfel. Böðvar moved to Eyr and established a home. At Stað there were forty cows and a hundred and twenty ewes. Þorgils kept a splendid establishment with a large number of persons and a fine house.

The ill-will which had developed between Böðvar and Einar Halldórsson smoothed itself out entirely as soon as Þorgils arrived, and the two kinsmen now enjoyed a very firm friendship. Þorgils often asked Böðvar's advice and respected him most of all the men in the district.

Þorgils sent Eyjólf Þorvarðsson to the Alþing with full authority for his goðorð.[25] He was to name the judges on behalf

of the Reykjaholt-men's goðorð and also the Jöklamen's goðord. But Eyjólf seemed unable to carry this through, so Þorleif, with Hrafn's help, named the judges for all the chieftains' goðorðs. When Eyjólf came home Þorgils talked with him and said Eyjólf hadn't the strength of character to do what he had undertaken, and this greatly displeased him.

25

It is now time to report that during this spring Gizur established a homestead at Flugumýr and all the district-men as far as Hrútafjarðará submitted to him; but he assigned the domain he owned in the south to his sons Hall and Ísleif. Gizur now became a man of great substance. That same spring men negotiated between Gizur and Hrafn and tried to bring about settlement and understanding between them; in the end a very firm friendship was established between Hrafn and Gizur.

Hall Gizurarson now asked for the hand of Ingibjörg Sturla's daughter, and this was agreed to at the Þing in the summer. She was then thirteen years old. Teit Einarsson took over the position of Lawspeaker which Óláf Þórðarson relinquished on the grounds of ill health. The marriage of Hall and Ingibjörg was to take place at Flugumýr on the first Sunday of Winter Nights.[26]

26

Hrafn Oddsson was living at this time at Sauðafel. He had many friends but was a very bitter enemy of Þorgils, as noted earlier. He posted spies west of the heath. There was a man named Halldór Vilmundarson, an ordained deacon, who kept watch for Hrafn west of the heath so that, sooner or later, he knew what was going on there. He lived at Outer Rauðamel. Rumor had it that the household at Stað could not last longer without outside help. Þorgils rode out with his homemen to Rauðamel and tried to get Halldór and his wife to move to Stað to manage the establishment. Halldór flatly refused. Þorgils offered to try to get the most prominent bóndis to stand surety

for his livestock, but Halldór would not accept on any terms. Þorgils now said that he would allow no one who was not loyal to him to set up an establishment in that district, whether or not he was ordained. Halldór denied any guilt in this respect; Þorgils bade him then take his oath on this, and Halldór swore: "I will swear no oaths to you."

Þorgils now had Halldór's cattle and sheep driven to Stað. Neither the priest nor any of the other clerics would eat the food which was prepared from these cattle. Halldór went to see Guðmund the overseer[27] at Helgafel, and Guðmund sent his brother Þórhall to Þorgils to demand that he have the livestock driven back, otherwise he would close the church to him and to everyone who was using the livestock. Þorgils said he would not have the livestock driven back, "But Guðmund could rule on the subject of church-going."

Halldór went to Sauðafel and told Hrafn how things stood. Hrafn was very bitter about it and invited Halldór and all his household to stay with him.

"I do not," he said, "want you two to quarrel about this, but I will take over the case and men will see how this outrage is avenged."

Halldór rode from there south to Kolbeinsstaðir where he met the priest Ketil and Narfi. They advised him to go to Skálaholt to meet with Abbot Brand, tell him what had happened, and follow his advice, "Since you are an ordained deacon."

Halldór went to the abbot, told him about his situation and asked for his help. The abbot said it was perfectly clear that he had been treated unfairly, "But I am less certain that you are not guilty by your own actions."

Halldór offered excuses for himself to the abbot, but the latter received them rather coldly: "It seems to me as if most of the men in the west are somewhat hostile toward Þorgils, if the truth were known."

The abbot now wrote a letter with Halldór and sent word to the priest Ketil to go with Halldór to Stað. He went to meet Ketil who rode with him to Stað. Þorgils received Ketil warmly and Ketil presented the abbot's letter in which Þorgils was asked

to have the livestock returned and to offer mutually acceptable terms in the case between him and Halldór; he was threatened otherwise with complete excommunication. Þorgils responded to the abbot's demands obligingly and said the livestock would be returned just as he wished, but added, "In the settlement of this affair between Halldór and me—" he said he would not let anyone else have a voice in it except himself.

Ketil tried to make peace but nothing came of it except that Þorgils threatened Halldór with very harsh action as soon as he had the opportunity. The end of the aflair was that Þorgils was to offer Halldór some satisfaction according to what he deserved. The livestock was now driven back and Þorgils was to offer Halldór some satisfaction according to what he deserved. The livestock was now driven back and Þorgils gave Halldór a Mass-robe; before they parted Halldór gave Þorgils three geldings and a four-year-old ox, and asked him for friendship, which Þorgils promised. When Hrafn learned about this he thought Halldór had shown little manliness.

27

During the summer Þorgils rode from home with eight others to Langadal to visit the priest Pál. Þorgils went to see Pál's daughter Ingibjörg who was then unmarried; but he did not make a proposal for he thought the woman ugly. He and Pál talked at length and the latter tried to see if he could bring about any understanding between Þorgils and Hrafn. Þorgils responded favorably and said he was willing to be reconciled with Sturla if he could win his full friendship.

"But," Þorgils said, "I want full satisfaction from Sturla for the offenses he has committed against me."

Pál reported all this to Sturla, "And Þorgils seems to me so well disposed toward a reconciliation that this may easily be effected now. I advise you to ride to meet with Þorgils for I know that you trust him."

Þorgils role to Helgafel where he stayed overnight. Guðmund was in a very friendly mood and began to try to reconcile Þor-

gils and Hrafn. Þorgils said he would not ask Hrafn for a reconciliation, but would reply as he thought fitting if an offer were made to him. Guðmund now offered to mediate, and reminded Þorgils of how little chance he had in any quarrel with powerful men:

"I think Gizur a greater friend of Hrafn than of you, and furthermore his ties with Sturla by marriage have now come to an end."

But Þorgils remained indifferent to this statement and paid little heed to the conversation. He now rode to Bjarnarhöfn and spent the night there; he tried to persuade Kolgrím and his daughter Þuríð to move to Stað and manage the establishment there. They were reluctant, but in the end it was decided on and he went south with them. When they reached Stað she at once took over the household; she was plain, and close-fisted, but with it all a woman greatly respected.

When Þorgils came home he sent Þórð south to Borgarfjörð to proclaim the sanctity of the Þverá leet.[28] The group were seven in number, and they stayed the night at Stafaholt. Óláf tried to dissuade them from going to the leet, saying that Þorleif and the district-men were ill-disposed toward Þorgils, but Þórð wanted to carry out what had been asked of him. The following day they rode to the leet, where there were many horse fights and a very large assemblage of men. Þórð went forward to the Þing-brink[29] and made all those proclamations which the law demanded he should on behalf of the Reykjaholt goðorð. Þorleif and Egil and other men of the district commented that Þorgils had not given up the district, since he had someone consecrate the leet and proclaim what he wanted. Þórð replied that nothing was farther from his mind for Þorgils had done this legally. They rode home now to Stað and Þorgils was well pleased with the expedition.

28

One day Þorgils rode with his followers to the hot springs at Lýsuhválslaug to enjoy himself. Vestar Torfason was living there then; his wife was Jóreið, a pretty woman. Þorgils and his men

dismounted by the swimming pool and Jóreið was already there washing clothes. Þorgils took her by the hand and began to chat laughingly with her. Vestar saw this, ran from the house and seized his weapons, then snatched a sword and drew it as he ran up to the hot springs. When Þorgils' followers saw this they ran over and took hold of Vestar, intending to manhandle him and take away his sword. But when Þorgils saw this, he ran over to them and told them not to mistreat Vestar.

"For he is a rather bold fellow who wanted to avenge the dishonor he thought was being done to him, though no such thing was involved here. Believe me, Vestar, I would not behave in any way that would bring dishonor to your wife. But because of your courage I will give you this axe."

And with this they parted.

29

A lattle later Þórð rode west to Staðarhól, where he and Sturla talked at great length about the quarrel between Þorgils and Sturla. It was clear to Þórð that Sturla was eager for a reconciliation, but he pointed out that on the other hand Þorgils was very short of means for making extensive compensation. Sturla asked what offer of peace he would give them, and Þórð said he thought there would be two choices: one, to offer Þorgils the choice of arbitrators and he would then pay whatever fines the arbitrators determined; the other, to grant Þorgils self-judgment and absolute friendship, never to desert him no matter what he needed or with whom he had to deal. Þórð said he expected that if Sturla chose this, Þorgils would, with the persuasion of good men, yield to him about the payment of fines. They now arranged a meeting between Þorgils and Sturla for the autumn, at a time they thought convenient, and Þórð rode home to Stað.

Þorgils was pleased with his report, but said the test would come later, when actions had to match fair words. During the summer Hrafn had ridden to the West Fjords and stayed there until he rode on to the celebration at Flugumýr. These deliberations were kept secret from him.

Þorgils often talked before his followers of how badly he had suffered from the dishonor he thought had been shown him in Borgarfjörð. He accused some of plotting against his life; some, of treachery and ill-will; and in the offers of peace he saw nothing but scorn and contempt for him. Still, it seemed to him he was too weak to raise a force against such a large host as the men of the district constituted, but he said he would certainly not let the matter rest there. Shortly afterwards Þorgils and Einar Halldórsson met each other in Vatnsholt. They decided to send a band of marauders to Borgarfjörð to force from Egil in Reykjaholt a grant of self-judgment, and to inflict on him as well as on many others who seemed to them to deserve it some sort of injury. Þorgils had men called up for the expedition. They rode out of Stað the Thursday before Michaelmas late in the day, thirty-five men in all. They rode south to Straumfjörð and slept there that night. They did not wake up for the ebb-tide during the night and in the morning they did not know whether the tide was going out or coming in. They took their horses and rode down along Straumfjörð, riding all that Friday and reaching never a homestead until they came into Valbjarnarvellir. There Þorgils rode up to the entrance and met Eilíf, the bóndi who lived there. He asked news of the district but Eilíf said it was quiet and there was no news. He had recently come north from Bær. He said that Þorleif of Garðar was at home, so far as he knew, and Egil of Reykjaholt. He asked what Þorgils meant to do, and Þorgils said this was none of his business. Berg ordered Eilíf to ride ahead and lead them south to Norðrá but Eilíf said he was not willing to accompany them so long as he did not know what they meant to do in the district. Sigmund Brandsson now exclaimed that they had no reason to free him from going against his will, but Þorgils said,

"We are not going to do him any harm; but this will be our bargain: you are not to join us, Eilíf, unless you are willing, but neither are you to send information about us to others."

Eilíf agreed to this and showed them their route. It began to grow dark and there was a dense fog. Berg rode ahead across the moors above Munaðarnes. When they reached Norðrá they

rested. Þorgils told his men that he intended to ride to Reykjaholt and capture Egil if possible but he forbade men to use weapons against him. Þorstein Árnason had been taken on as a steward at Reykjaholt in the spring, and he was not very popular with Þorgils, who thought Þorstein had given Hrafn and Sturla information about his stay at Stafaholt. As soon as they were ready they rode off, across the Hvítá to Ámótsvað.

Þórð Hítarnes rode to Snældubeinsstaðir but Þorgils and his men were to wait for him at Ámótsvað, where the route led away across Reykjardalsá. Þórð and his company reached Snældubeinsstaðir and procured large candles. From there they went to Reykjardalsá. Berg Ámundason and fourteen others were already there. They had no news of Þorgils and Einar. Þorgils had dismounted in order to relieve himself while Berg and his men had ridden on, and they had not met one another again. They all rode up to Reykjaholt now, by the road through Grímsstaðir; Berg and his men debated whether they should ride into the homestead or not. They dismounted and waited to see if Þorgils would come. The dogs at Reykjaholt now began to bark, so they decided to ride in on the homestead. The men divided themselves into two groups: Þórð and his men moved north of the churchyard, while Berg and his group moved south of the hot springs up to the south entrance. When the two parties reached the entrance doors, each was firmly locked. They decided to lift Böðvar kampi up over the defensive wall, and he drew the bolts back from the doors. Both groups now entered and met in front of the doors to the hall. They sent someone for fire from the kitchen but since it was slow in coming Berg and Þórð went on into the hall. In there a man ran into Þórð's arms and Þórð asked who he was.

"I am Egil, kinsman, and I wish for quarter."[30]

At this moment light was brought in; the men entered the hall and the others began to get up, but Berg said they must lie quiet if they did not want to be hurt. The men lay down again and talked among themselves. Berg and his men went through the entire hall and ransacked every bed but did not find Egil. Berg then ransacked the little room and loft, and thus

he discovered Þorstein Árnason lying in the loft. They asked the priest Þórð Bersason if Egil were at home. He asked them why they had come in there in such an uproar, and they replied that there had certainly been no violence. The priest said Egil had ridden out to Akranes. At this moment Þorgils and Einar came in; they had lost their way and were therefore late. The priest Þórð greeted Þorgils and asked quarter for the homemen, but he said he could not tell them where Egil was, only that he was not at home.

Þorgils said he would not promise quarter to anyone. Now Berg told him that Þorstein Árnason was lying up in the loft. When Þorgils had heard about Egil and was perfectly certain that Egil was not at home he went up to the loft. He accused Þorstein of having plotted against his life when he gave information about his being at Stafaholt. But Þorstein denied this, and said that he was now sick. Þorgils ordered his hand to be struck off, ordering Sigurð knappsöðul to do so; Þórð told Þorgils not to strike off his hand, for it was shameful to wound a sick man, and the two kinsmen then began to argue hotly. Berg called out to Þorkel hvíti but Þórð went off outside. Þorkel now struck Þorstein's hand so that he partially severed it from the wrist.

30

After this Þorgils and his men rode away, north to Síðumúli. Berg and some of the others were separated from them and lost their way, but they all arrived somewhat later at Síðumúli. When Þorgils and his group were riding up to the enclosure at Síðumúli, Þórð rode over to Þorgils and said:

"If you intend to do any damage in Síðumúli I mean to leave. But if you intend to effect a reconciliation or an agreement here, then I will put into it everything I can."

Þorgils said, "I do not intend anything here but a reconciliation, and you are to have an important say in this if your words count for anything with them."

They rode to the house now and Þórð went up in front, accompanied by Böðvar kampi. They dismounted at once and knocked;

a man came out to the door but when he unlocked it and saw the men he immediately turned back indoors. Þórð went in and Þorkel the priest asked what men had come. Þórð gave his name.

"And how many others have come?" asked the priest.

Þórð said, "Þorgils Böðvarsson and some other men. I want you to receive him with honor and come to a fair agreement with him on the charges he has brought against you."

The priest Þorkel replied at once, and curtly, "I will not enter into any agreement here, for I am in no way guilty."

"You will be alone in coming to that conclusion," Þórð said, "whether the case is determined for good or ill. But I refrain from taking sides, no matter how it turns out."

He turned away now and went out, but Þorgils and Einar went inside alone and stood firmly in the middle of the room. They were asked who had come in and Einar said, "Þorgils Böðvarsson and some men with him."

Then they were asked what they wanted, and Þorgils replied, "I have come to look for my friends, for it seems to me that up to now I have found only a few here in the south."

And he added, "Is the priest at home, or his sons?"

He was told the priest was at home but no information was given about his sons. Þorgils and Einar stood there in their places on the floor, and all was silent.

Then Þorgils exclaimed, "It may be, Einar, that we do not need to ask now whether the priest's sons are at home."

"Why not?" said Einar.

"Because someone is striking up at us from the hall-seat," said Þorgils.

"Will it not be best, then," said Einar, "if we strike back as fast as possible?"

And they drew their swords and struck out in retaliation. Weapons clashed together for some time, and then Þorgils said, "My sword has been struck from my hand."

Einar answered, "It is foolish to be fighting here in the dark. Let us go out and find a light so that these men can see what is going on."

Þórð met them in the entranceway; he saw blood on them

when they went out and asked if they were wounded. Einar said they were not. Þórð and Magnús gargan with some others now went inside with drawn swords, along the length of the whole hall, but did not see anyone. Þórð asked where were the men who wanted to fight but he got no answer. When he reached the hall doorway he met a man coming towards him and asked who he was. He gave his name as Snorri; he was barefooted and unarmed so Þórð let him go on out the door. He ran out at once, knocked down the man standing nearest, and then ran farther along the wall. They were taken by surprise at this and Þorgils bade men follow him. But no one did and he at once made his escape.

They now went through the whole house with torches, searching for men. They diseovered Valgarð in the hall beneath a tapestry, seized him and led him out. He was threatened with death. They did not find Þorgils' sword nor did anyone admit having taken it. Valgarð's wife Ingibjörg now eame out and offered everything she possessed to save his life. Þorgils declared that he would not accept an offer from anyone except Valgarð's father. Men went to Þorkel the priest and begged him to offer compensation for the plot against Þorgils' life and for those injuries which his homemen had inflicted on Þorgils and Einar while they were inside—for each of them was wounded in the hand when he eame out. Þorkel said he would offer no eompensation, adding, "They will have to be more in need of compensation than that."

"Then Valgarð must die," Þorgils said.

Valgarð now asked to be given confession by his father and this was granted at once. Men thought they heard him ask his father to redeem him but Þorkel refused. Þorgils now ordered Eyjólf smið to kill him and Valgarð was now slain.

Then they rode off out to Kolbeinsstaðir by evening. There Narfi the priest gave them suffieient absolution for them to associate with other men and they spent the night there. The next day Þorgils rode back home to Stað. People spoke ill of this expedition of his.

Blöðru-Svart now arrived from Staðarhól and said that Sturla wanted them to meet before he rode north to the celebration at Flugumýr. Þorgils wanted Sturla to ride across Rauðamelsheið to meet him, each to come secretly with four other men on the appointed day. Þorgils rode from home that day and they met at Eldshólmar south of Hafsfjarðará. They talked a good deal about the Stafaholt expedition and about the accusations brought against Þorgils in Stafaholt. He specifically denied that he was in any way guilty before Sturla, and Sturla did not insist on this. Þorgils offered their case to the judgment of the priest Pál but Sturla did not want this, saying: "I want you to arbitrate."

Their agreement now was that Sturla should give Þorgils self-judgment, and he accepted this in his own name and in that of the men who had been with him at Stafaholt, which was by his estimate forty men. When they had reached an agreement Þorgils at once pronounced the verdict: he stipulated five hundreds from Sturla for each man and ten hundreds for Sturla. They talked at length about the Síðumúli expedition and Sturla expressed his displeasure with it. Sturla now bade Þorgils be very careful and before they parted they embraced.

Þorgils then also took Sturla by the hand and said: "You have now given me self-judgment, kinsman, and done so honorably. I have demanded of you a large fine but still, no larger than I think I deserve. Nevertheless I know that you are not well off and I do not want this to evoke new strife between us. I will therefore remit the whole fine, kinsman. and neither I myself nor any of my heirs will ever claim it, whether things are going well between us or not."

Sturla thanked him heartily for the great friendship he had shown and they bound by oath an agreement that each was to support the other with all the strength he could muster, and they parted with the greatest affection. Sturla rode west to Langadal and gave out that he had met Pál the priest, while Þorgils rode home to Stað.

During the summer Hrani Koðránsson came south to Staðarhól. He stayed there almost a week, and many men wondered about his journey. While he was there Einar Ásgrímsson had the foot struck off a poor man named Magnús soðkrók: Einar accused him of spying on his household for Vigfús.

At that time Eyjólf Rögnvaldsson was staying with Einar. Einar now went with seventeen men to Reykjanes to see Vigfús at Breiðabólsstaðir. Eyjólf's father Rögnvald was there, as well as Skeggi Ingimundarson and Hallkel's sons Halldór and Eilíf. They had recently returned from sea and had gone down to the bath-house in the evening before Einar and his men arrived. When the din was heard below the house they ran up to the hall and called out that an attack was being made. They ran to the main room then because most of them kept their weapons there, but they got no use of them. When Einar and his men rushed into the entrance-hall Skeggi ran to the doorway and defended himself valiantly, but he died there. Hall Gunnsteinsson, Þórð Ívarsson, and Eyjólf hrafnhaus now ran to the doorway: there was a savage attack but they defended themselves well. At the same time Einar and his men had brought fire up to the other entrances and now attacked them with fire and smoke.

Eyjólf called out to his father three times, offering to let him come out. But Rögnvald steadily gave the same answer—he would never go out if Vigfús were not granted quarter. Eyjólf said then, "Then you can burn in there, you old devil!"

Vigfús had awakened late and run out in his shirt and linen breeks. He snatched a sword and struck at Pál Teitsson three times, and Pál promptly ran away. Rögnvald got a huge stone and climbed with it up on the footboard running along the partition wall, which did not reach up to the ceiling. He said as he threw it down, "Fall, my stone, wherever God wills."

The stone struck the rim of Einar's steel hat but then bounced down from there against his upper lip so hard that two teeth fell out. He sank down under this blow and almost lost consciousness. After this the attack abated. Gunnstein had made

attempts toward a settlement. The roof then fell down on the whole outer section of the hall. Einar agreed to quarter and it was arranged.

Einar Guðmundarson and his companion were badly wounded. Everyone was wounded but everyone was healed except Skeggi. Hallkel's sons now came out of the main room and urged on the attack, but Vigfús was unwilling because quarter had already been granted, and the attackers rode away.

A ship had been laid up for the winter in Dýrafjörð. Sigurð seli and Kolfinna Þorvald's daughter had sailed abroad in it without their kinsmen's knowledge. Aron Hjörleifsson had come back to Iceland with Gizur and Einar snagi. King Hákon had reconciled them over the slaying of Sigmund Erling's father. Aron then went to the West Fjords and asked for money to pay the fine for the slaying, and he got some. That same summer Þorleif Guðmundarson returned to Iceland.

In the autumn Sturla made ready for the journey to his daughter Ingibjörg's wedding. She was now in her fourteenth year; she was a pretty, well-mannered woman and very able. Hrafn Oddsson accompanied Sturla on this journey as did the priest Snorri from below Fell. Þorleif Guðmundarson was also with them and the best men from the western region. Hrafn was Gizur's guest.

33

Abbot Brand sent word to Þorgils to tell him to go north to Hólar and seek absolution from Bishop Heinrek, and Þorgils rode north before Advent. At Flugumýr he met Gizur, who showed him the greatest friendliness then. Þorgils rode to Hólar where the bishop gave him absolution for the slaying of Valgarð; their relations were pleasant and friendly. When Þorgils rode back he and Gizur met at Flugumýr and Gizur then rode with Þorgils as far as Vatnsskarð. They talked at length and got on pretty well, though still not with complete trust. They parted courteously and Þorgils rode to Stað where he remained quietly at home for the winter.

34

In the spring messages were exchanged between Þorgils and Hrafn and a meeting was arranged between them at Rauðamel. Hrafn granted Þorgils self-judgment in the case of the Stafaholt raid. Þorgils stipulated ninety hundreds from Hrafn, five hundreds for each man, ten hundreds for Nikulás, and twenty hundreds for Hrafn.[31] But Vigfús was to make his own peace terms; Þorgils got self-judgment from him but relinquished this so that Vigfús could redeem himself honorably. Þorgils now remained at home in his establishment at Stað.

35

Bishop Sigvarð returned to Iceland as was said earlier; [32] Þorkel the priest went to meet him and sought his help in the prosecution for the slaying of Valgarð. The bishop took on the case, at once rode west to Borg, and sent a message to Þorgils. He and the bishop then met at Langárfors where the bishop tried to effect a reconciliation between Þorgils and the priest Þorkel. The bishop was spokesman for the priest. An agreement was quickly reached: the bishop was to arbitrate the case; he was to come to an agreement with Þorgils and take on all Þorkel's obligations. Hrafn was to pay Þorkel twenty hundreds, but for the Síðumúli raid and the slaying of Valgarð the bishop stipulated forty hundreds. They agreed on this and the bishop and Þorgils got on well together. Hrafn was also to pay Þorljót for the property at Steinþórsstaðir and in addition pay Eyvind bratt twenty-five hundreds. With this all the compensation which Hrafn was to pay to Þorgils had been arranged for.

36

It is now time to report on Eyjólf Þorsteinsson and his men, and Hrafn Oddsson. From Bishop Heinrek word reached them that they were to go north to release him from bondage[33] and get Odd out of the the district, for the bishop was certain, at the time he sent word to Eyjólf, that he would not be freed but would be driven from the country. Hrafn and Eyjólf now sent

word to Þorgils who met them at Snorri's in Eyr; they asked him to accompany them on the journey north and Þorgils said he would go if they would allow him to live in Skagafjörð. They agreed, provided that the bishop would consent as well as the bóndis, but they meant to drive Odd out of the district or kill him. Þorgils sent for his kinsman Sturla who set out immediately and called up forces. Hrafn sent for Þorleif; the men of Borgarfjörð came with him and had a large force. Vigfús Gunnsteinsson was also there with the men of Króksfjörð. Einar Þorvaldsson came with the men of Ísafjörð and of Selárdal. Gísli's sons from Rauðasand, the men of Strandir and of Steingrímsfjörð. This force gathered together in the autumn after the Latter Feast of the Virgin Mary. Men reckoned that there were probably thirteen hundred in the company.

The force now moved north but when they reached Vatnsskarð they were told that the bishop had been freed and Odd had ridden off—but no one knew this for certain. The troops were not dispersed. In the evening Þorgils rode to Auðkúlustað and Einar Halldórsson rode with a group of men to Svínavatn where they were given a warm welcome. At that time Kolþerna Einar's daughter was living there; she was the sister of Kolbein in Grímstunga. Einar and Kolþerna were cousins. Altogether the group numbered forty. Þorgils had said they were to protect her whatever happened.

There was a man named Ari, the son of Smið-Skeggi, who was married to Kolþerna's daughter. He went out to the courtyard during the evening and saw Hrafn Oddsson and Eyjólf riding up with their troop. Eyjólf jumped from his horse and said to his followers: "Catch Ari there and give him a thrashing."

Hámund várbelg was quickest to seize and hold Ari but Eyjólf's followers thrashed him with their riding whips. A man now came in and reported that Eyjólf Þorsteinsson and his men were outside and were mistreating the son-in-law of the mistress of the house: "Try to give him some help, Einar, if you can."

Einar and his companions sprang up, seizing those weapons nearest at hand. Stein Arnórsson and Jón also ran out; Jón was the swiftest and ran in under Hámund, lifted him up and threw

him violently to the ground. Ari was then freed and ran indoors. Eyjólf hurled a buckler after him but it struck the doorpost just as Einar and his men were coming out of the doorway. Eyjólf now bade his men run inside and seize Ari. Einar said it would cost them something this time, for—"We have strengthened your company in an unhappy hour," he said, "if our kinsmen are to be mistreated at our own hands. For if he is mistreated now, we will be mistreated even worse."

A halt was now called and there was no further attack. Hrafn rode up to them and asked why they were quarreling; they told him and he said, "Let us ride away, Eyjólf—we will often have a chance to do as we like with Ari without getting in a fight with our own homemen."

Later Ögmund Ísólfsson and his companions rode up. They had taken a horse from Bjarni at Auðkúlustaðir, but Þorgils told Þórð to go after them and take the horse away from them. He did so and returned it to Auðkúlustaðir.

In the evening the whole force rode north over Blönduhlíð and spent a night in sheep-houses while spies were sent out into Vatnsskarð to get information. When everyone had dismounted the men sat down. Hrafn asked Þórð if he would admit that he had mistreated Hrafn's men during the day and had committed robbery. Þórð said he would admit he had demanded a horse from Bjarni before they had taken it. Hrafn said it was awkward to govern this company, "If one man is to rob another. And you can be sure that there will shortly be even greater outrage."

He reproached Þórð also for being party with several others to the slaying of his foster son Valgarð, and said he would very likely suffer for this. Þórð said he would not take this in silence in front of Hrafn's men if their forces were equal, adding that he did not know whether the next time would turn out any better.

And Hrafn said, "You are only bandying words with me. And as for you, Ögmund, you too have acted shamefully. You are one of the worst-natured of men, but you haven't the courage to fight for your own interests."

Vigfús now said, half-aloud, "Sit still, Ögmund."

Sturla said, "It is not fair for you to harass Þórð about that.

It was only for the sake of others that he took any part in the affair. If you have our kinsman Þórð slain, then we will put some of your men to death."

Hrafn and Sturla exchanged a few words with each other and each had his own opinion. Þorgils now ordered his men to stand up and move away; Þorgils and Sturla with their companions rose and went over to the other side of the enclosure where they lay down with their weapons and clothes. Þorgils appointed some men to keep watch during the night. Early in the morning the whole company rode to Bólstaðarhlíð, where the men dismounted and rested while the chieftains held a conference. Þorgils was reluctant but he went to the meeting; they were four altogether, with Þórð, Einar, and Berg.

When they sat down Hrafn asked, "Should all these men be here?"

And Þorgils replied, "We should all be here or else all go away."

They were sitting together but little was said; their most important decision was that they would ride to Skagafjörð and call a meeting of that district for Sunday.

37

When Þorgils rode south he sent Þórð to Ásbjörn to find out what help he could expect there if he tried to win the district. It was clear to Þórð from Ásbjörn's replies that he was apprehensive about the whole thing, but he said he was most anxious to serve Þorgils—he said he did not understand his dreams at all if Þorgils was not to be chieftain in Skagafjörð some time, and added that he would advise Þorgils not to lay claim to Skagafjörð this winter, but to see first who might clear out, for he said he had a foreboding that there would be a great change in the course of the winter. The conclusion was that Ásbjörn promised that in such an event he would give whatever help Þorgils demanded of him which he felt able to provide, if Þorgils again tried to win the district. Þorgils and his men now rode home to Stað and stayed there quietly.

38

During the winter just mentioned[34] Þorstein Árnason and Finn of Sámsstaðir rode out to Hítarnes on Wednesday during Lent. Þorstein asked Þórð to ride with them to Stað to try to effect a reconciliation with Þorgils and his kinsmen. They rode to Stað on Maundy Thursday.

Þórð tried to persuade Þorgils to make some compensation to Þorstein for striking off his hand, arguing that Þorstein had come to meet Þorgils almost alone, and that furthermore it was now most of all a time to show mercy for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ and His suffering. At first Þorgils was rather reluctant, but in the end they reached an agreement and Þorgils was to give the verdict in the case. They now reached full reconciliation, sworn to in good faith. Þorgils stipulated fifteen hundreds, but some of this was dropped because of countercharges, and Þorgils promised Þorstein his friendship and support.

39

Þorgils skarði and Þorvarð Þórarinsson were third cousins and by virtue of this kinship it occurred to Þorvarð to try to get troops or some assistance from Þorgils. He sent men west to him at Stað in the spring with letters in which he asked if Þorgils would on any terms help him to avenge his brother Odd so that he could achieve full satisfaction for his death: "And I will spare nothing in this attempt."

Þorgils brought the matter before Sturla and his other friends and they came to a decision. Þorgils did not flatly refuse to help but said that nothing could be decided until they met, and he asked Þorvarð to arrange a meeting between them: "For I will not leave this district."

That summer before the Alþing Hrafn and Eyjólf collected their forces and went south to Borgarfjörð. They had heard that Þorvarð and Þorgils were exchanging messages. With their troops they struck down into Borgarfjörð, intending to prevent Þorgils from riding to the Þing. They now directed their enmity against him, and so it was that Þorgils did not ride to the Þing nor did Sturla, for it was reported that men were moving against

Þorgils, intending to do him some harm. But nothing came of this.

When they knew that Þorvarð did not ride to the Þing they dispersed their troops. Eyjólf and his men rode to the north and posted Nikulás in Kalmanstunga and Egil at Reykjaholt to get information for them if they heard of any hostility or gathering in of troops.

40

At this time Magnús Jónsson, Þorvarð's kinsman, arrived from the East Fjords. He had avoided habitations to a large extent and traveled always at night. Therefore no one got wind of his journey before he reached Stað. He now called on Þorgils anew for help, on behalf of Þorvarð. He said that Þorvarð would have set out by now on his journey from the east and wanted them to meet on the Feast of St. Margrét in the western part of Bláskógaheið, and that Þorgils was to have as many men with him as were necessary to move on from there, whatever decision they adopted. Þorvarð had pledged himself only on condition that a reconciliation with Hrafn and Eyjólf was achieved, and that Þorgils be given the district in Skagafjörð, so that he would no longer need to terrify them. Sturla had now ridden west to Staðarhól to have a living room built, and Þorgils sent him a message there telling him to come to a meeting with him and Þorvarð, adding that the more men he had with him the better.

On his way back east Magnús had come into Raudsgil where he was recognized. Nikulás and Egil learned about this and told Hrafn and Eyjólf that they thought Magnús' journey suspicious but that they had no reliable information about Þorvarð. Hrafn now rode south and called for a meeting with Þorleif up on the fells in the interior of Hrútafjörð. Þorleif could say nothing but that Þorvarð was in every way hostile to them. They now agreed that Þorleif was to hold himself ready to bring help to Hrafn and Eyjólf the moment they needed it. Hrafn rode from here to Sauðafel where he learned that Þorgils was at Stað and Sturla at Staðarhól. He could not see but that everything was peaceful in the district. After this Hrafn rode back north while Þorleif remained in the district and tried to get information.

Þorgils Böðvarsson summoned a very big meeting for the Midsummer Sunday.[35] Einar Halldórsson and a host of men came. Þorgils called on men to join him, saying, "I am going to ride south below Hraun to Krák to meet my kinsman Sturla."

And for this he called up those men he thought best equipped with weapons for the expedition. Altogether they were about seventy men; foremost among them was his kinsman Einar Halldórsson, and then the bóndis and their sons. They rode from the meeting at once, south across Borgarfjörð, and the men had a deep suspicion that there was something serious behind this expedition. When they came out south of Selalón Þorgils sent Glúm Hafliðason and Böðvar Vermundarson to Þórð in Hítarnes asking him to come to him below Hraun before sunrise. They reached Hítarnes at midnight and everyone was asleep. They announced their plans the moment they arrived, and Þórð arose and got ready immediately. They said nothing more to him. He dressed wtih great haste; he had no byrnie, but did have some weapons. Þorkel brennir rode with him. When they came up below Hraun, Þorgils had not yet risen; when he was dressed he called Þórð into talk with him, saying that he meant to ride south in the district to meet his kinsman Sturla. The men now ate their main meal in various buildings and then rode off. As they were riding along Þórð again asked about Þorgils' expedition, and Þorgils talked about it quite honestly.

"I have heard," he said, "that Þorleif has visited in various places in the district in order to supply Hrafn and Eyjólf with information as to whether Þorvarð went north or Þorgils came in from the west."

He thought he had something to requite Þorleif for, on account of the ill-will he had shown him in Borgarfjörð, and because during the summer Þorleif had planned with Hrafn and Eyjólf to attack Þorgils.

41

In the summer Hrafn had had Þorgils' kinsman Þórð pursued on horseback, thus making his hostility quite clear. But Þórð had escaped westward to Staðarhól when he could not get through

the Dales before Hrafn. Sturla had a homestead there but during the spring had built another at Hítardal; he had procured this from Ketil, who was reluctant to give it up but, still, was not forced to do so. During the summer Sturla was sometimes at Staðarhól and sometimes at Hítardal.

That spring Gísli of Rauðasand and his sons were sentenced to outlawry at the Þórsnes Þing. They had quarreled with the men of Selárdal about the fowlers' rock tax at Barðsgnípa. Þorgils supported his kinsmen the Selárdalers at the Þing and in return they promised him their assistance. When Þórð arrived in Staðarhól it happened that Sturla was standing outside all alone, and his men were laying stone on the wall of the living room he was having built. Sturla greeted Þórð and asked him the news, asking what he could report about Hrafn and Eyjólf. Þórð said he knew this about Hrafn—he had reached Stað in Hrútafjörð, and by now would have met with Þorleif, that Hrafn had ridden to the Dales and there learned what Sturla and Þorgils were doing, and how peaceful things were in the district. Sturla said he could see it would come to a struggle between them, but Þórð argued about this. Sturla said it made no difference what they said, "For it will come to a battle this summer and not everyone will live through it."

There was a man named Helgi and known as keis, a homeman of Sturla's. He was a small, insignificant man. He was throwing turf on the wall of the room but it seemed to him he had to work altogether too fast, for the wall was high and he was not strong so that it was hard for him to throw the turf upwards.

"I think you mean to work me to death," he said.

Sturla said, "Be brave, foster son, for there is something else in store for you than death from casting turf, though it's true you do not have long to live."

It turned out that Helgi keis was killed at Staðarhól the following summer when Hrafn and Ásgrím attacked Sturla in his homestead.

This summer the men of Selárdal and of Rauðasand were reconciled, and Gísli and his sons were hereafter always friends with Þorgils.

Now it is time to say more about the conversation between the two kinsmen Þorgils and Þórð. Þorgils made known that he intended to attack Þorleif, saying he had learned that Þorleif had entered the district very often, and had a following of ten to twelve men. Þorgils rode south across Mýrar until he reached the southern part of the woods opposite Galtarholt. They dismounted there, and shortly afterwards Sturla arrived. Altogether he had nearly sixty men and Þorgils had seventy. Two of Hrafn's men, Óláf and Grani, Arnór's sons, were with them.

Þorgils and Sturla now conferred with others. Sturla thought he had heard that on Sunday Þorleif had attended that same meeting[36] at Furúos and that everything was quiet in the district. Starri kaupung had just come from Saurbær in the west, and said that Sturla was at Staðarhól and meant to stay there until his living room was finished, and then ride home to Hítardal. Sturla had also heard that Þorleif had ridden to Bær on Sunday evening, and the rumor was that he would ride directly after this to Akranes as soon as he knew that everything was quiet in the countryside there. Þorkel hrút was sent south across Hvítá for information and was to inquire about Þorleif's journey, and the men now lay down to sleep. When evening drew on they saddled their horses and rode along the routes which led south to Vallavað. Þorkel hrút came to meet them there and had learned that in mid-afternoon Þorleif had been at Bær and meant to stay there overnight. That day Þorleif had been at the hot springs before afternoon and had then lain down to sleep, as was his custom. When he woke up he said to his brother Böðvar that he had dreamed a great deal:

"I seemed to be standing here in Bær and seemed to be looking out over Borgarfjörð. I thought a big ship was sailing in along the fjord, headed for Hvítá. It seemed that I asked a man who stood near me what ship this might be, and he said that it belonged to Þorgils skarði. I thought I saw many sparks flying up from the ship and that some flew outwards in this direction to Bær while others flew out over Reykjardal, then north over the fell as far as one's eye could see."

Böðvar said, "That must mean, kinsman, that a storm is brewing."

"It looks to me like strife," Þorleif agreed.

He ordered their horses brought up and said, "I will ride out to Akranes."

Þorleif and his men then had their evening meal, and later in the evening rode out to the forest by Grjóteyr where they slept that night. Early in the morning they rode home to Akranes without getting any news of the district.

Þorgils met with Þorkel hrút who told him what he had learned; men now thought it very likely that Þorleif was at Bær. Þorgils bade all his men beware most of all of doing any harm to Böðvar, his sons, or any of his household, because of their kinship and their friendship. At this time Sturla was not a great friend of Böðvar, for he thought Böðvar had advised Ketil to resist the move from Hítardal. Þorgils declared that they were not to stand in their way even though Þorleif had come into Bær.

The men now rode up to Bær and arrived under the cover of night. The outer entrances were open; people had heard the noise and Böðvar and his sons and homemen now put on their clothes. Þorgils and his men went straight in but Sturla and his men remained outside, looking after the horses that were outside the enclosure. When Þorgils entered the hall Böðvar bóndi went to meet him; he was now dressed and carried a snag-horned axe in his hand. Böðvar asked who was entering his house in such a hostile fashion—for some of the men who entered had drawn weapons. Þorgils gave his name, and Böðvar said: "Least of all did I expect you would come here in so warlike a manner, considering our relationship and our agreements."

"I mean no harm to you or to your household," said Þorgils, and then he asked where Þorleif was.

The mistress of the house, Herdís, answered, "Fortunately, kinsman, he is not here—and you will now behave as best you can toward my huband Böðvar."

"He will receive only fair treatment at my hands," said Þorgils.

There were few men in the hall, and they quickly discovered that Þorleif was not there but had ridden away that evening.

Þorgils now moved out-of-doors, as did Böðvar and his sons, but some men ran in and pulled down their swords. When Þorgils and Böðvar came outside they talked with one another, in the company of some of the other men. Böðvar reproached Þorgils for this visitation, but Þorgils thought he was in no way guilty in Böðvar's sight.

"For I have no ill-will toward you," he said, "and I will give you such satisfaction for this expedition as will please you greatly."

Böðvar said, "I'm in no great need of money now but you are shorter of it than I."

The two kinsmen now began to arrange a reconciliation; Böðvar said that he would defend his brother Þorleif the best he could if he were attacked at home.

"And I will also defend you, Þorgils, if Þorleif makes an attack on you. I have often prevented Þorleif from making a pact with Hrafn and Eyjólf, for I believe he will get no satisfaction from them. And equally, Þorgils, I have suggested that you give Þorleif good support and that he accept this graciously; but neither of you has wanted to accept my suggestions."

Now some deals were made about horses, and Böðvar allowed Þorgils to ride whichever horse he wanted up to Reykjaholt, but he would give no horse to Sturla or his men. Böðvar offered to conduct negotiations between Þorgils and Þorleif; Þorgils agreed because, he said, "I place great value on your words."

43

Þorgils and his men now rode up to Reykjaholt, for they had by then learned that Egil was at home and Þorgils wanted to straighten out the situation between Egil and himself. Þorgils and his men came into Reykjaholt when it was almost morning. At the time they were riding from Grímsstaðir a man named Koðrán and nicknamed skrögg went outdoors at Reykjaholt; he saw several armed men riding along the way from Grímsstaðir and going rather fast. He ran indoors then and told Egil that many armed men were riding into the enclosure. Egil jumped up, gave no thought to dressing but seized the key to the church,

saying, "It must be my kinsman Þorgils, who has not given up his idea of attacking me."

Egil got into the church and locked the door behind him. Þorgils rode up to the church door. The priest Þórð had come out in front of the door and greeted Þorgils, who received his greeting fairly and at once asked him if Egil were inside. The priest said he was at home and had gone into the church.

Þorgils said, "You must be speaking the truth," adding that he had seen the poor fellow when he locked the church door, "and he did not appear to have much clothing on."

The priest said, "One cannot tell what might have happened if he had waited for you, Þorgils my friend."

Þorgils now went to his men and bade them dismount and stay there, "But you can turn your horses into the pasture."

Sturla said this was not advisable, because "The Apostle Peter[37] owns the home-field and he has not committed any offence against Þorgils."

Einar the bóndi and Berg told the men to drive their horses out of the field, and Þorgils asked them to provide men to look after the horses. They said this would be done, and the horses were driven out of the pasture and cared for out on the ness. Men at once swarmed through the house, found something to drink in Egil's cellar and told Þorgils about this, but he did not want any drinking: "I mean to have no looting here," he said.

Berg Ámundason and the priest Þórð now tried to arrange a reconciliation between Þorgils and Egil. Their differences of opinion were many, for it seemed to Egil that he had a strong case against Þorgils on account of the attack he made on Egil's homestead when Þorstein's hand was struck off. Many men now took part in the negotiations; one of them was his kinsman Sturla Þórðarson, then Einar Halldórsson, Berg Ámundason, and the priest Þórð. But Þorgils was so obstinate that he said he intended to do such plundering there as Egil would remember to the day of his death. The men now suggested to Egil that the longer their quarrel continued the greater the likelihood that his fate would be worse, so Egil now had them ask quarter on his behalf, and this was granted. He came out of the church and the two

kinsmen talked together. Egil offered to have Sturla arbitrate in their case, enumerating many complaints against Þorgils involving the management of their establishment and the loss of money, which had occurred in the winter when Þorgils had taken over the establishment and which was not yet repaid; of his raid on Reykjaholt in the winter and the resulting confiscation of property which they had suffered that winter. Þorgils accused Egil of great disloyalty and of plotting against his life, adding that he was responsible for the deep ill-will which the men of the district had shown him during the winter he was in Reykjaholt. No matter what they discussed the result was that Egil submitted to Þorgils and gave him self-judgment: Þorgils was to arbitrate their whole case as he wished.

Þorgils and his men now lay down to sleep, as did the whole troop except the sentinel, while Egil had a meal prepared. When Þorgils awoke he had the Mass *De Sancta Margareta* sung for him, and when the service was ended they went into the main room which was well furnished with tapestries and hangings. Egil was in very high spirits now; they had the best of entertainment and there was drinking for the general company. When the men had eaten Egil summoned Þorgils, Sturla, Einar Halldórsson, and others into the little room with many more men until the room was full. They now enjoyed a splendid feast and drinking, and men remarked to Þorgils how handsomely Egil was acting. He accepted this pleasantly but did not change countenance much over it.

At this time Högni Böðvarsson arrived from Bær with some men. He said that the Reverend Abbot Brand had spent the night at Lund in Reykjardal and had now arrived at Bær, that Böðvar had therefore not yet ridden over but would come with the abbot in the course of the day. Þorgils welcomed Högni warmly and made a place for him next to himself. In mid-afternoon two men arrived—one was named Þórarin and the other Jörund gest. They had been sent by Þorvarð Þórarinsson; they reported that he had come down to Rauðsgil and wanted Þorgils to meet him and talk over their plans, and that he had one hundred men. Þorgils moved at once and ordered the horses saddled.

When the men were ready Þorgils summoned Egil to him and they conferred; Sturla, Einar, Berg Ámundason, and Þórð Hítnesing were with them. Þorgils now pronounced his verdict in the case between him and Egil. First, Egil was to make payment to the see at Reykjaholt for all that he had squandered during the winter Þorgils had had the homestead. Þorgils was to have everything returned which had earlier been taken from Reykjaholt. Furthermore, Egil was not to give help to anyone against Þorgils, but to give him information if he learned of any possible danger to Þorgils. Þorgils promised his support to Egil whenever he needed it. Neither of them was to stipulate fines but from now on they were to be united by their kinship and full friendship. They kept the pact faithfully, and men thought they could tell at once that Egil was very pleased with the agreement.

Þorgils told Egil he was going to ride to meet Þorvarð, and Egil invited him with those men he chose to return to him that evening. Þorgils and his men now rode to Rauðsgil, and Þorvarð was already there. With him were Finnbjörn and Ögmund Helgason, Magnús and Helgi Helgason, Sumarliði sterki, Þorgeir, Odd, Ögmund prjón, and Óláf from Burstarfel. They went now to talk with Þorgils and his kinsman Þorvarð, Sturla, and some other men. They discussed the way things had turned out between them during the winter and found little to disagree about in the whole matter.

44

When they had talked for a while, Abbot Brand arrived, riding in with his kinsman Böðvar of Bær. They were five all told and were graciously welcomed. But the abbot had little to say to Þorgils; he thought it wrong of Þorgils to have ridden in on Böðvar at Bær with an armed band. The abbot had heard about Þorvarð's expedition. Þorvarð now sought support from Þorgils, asking him to help him avenge his brother Odd against Hrafn and Eyjólf; he cited as reasons Þorgils' kinship with Odd and, not less important, Hrafn's and Eyjólf's enmity toward Þorgils, adding that no one could maintain his self-respect as long as

Hrafn and Eyjólf held power, and their arrogance and tyranny could not be brought down by any means.

"Therefore I have sought you out," said Þorvarð, "for advice, for I thought you the most likely person to give me some help in this matter. You can also see the forces which I have assembled from the East Fjords, and I expect them to give a good account of themselves. Still, this is a very small company against such superior forces as we have to fight: I want to make clear that I think it better if you strengthen my hand in this matter."

Þorgils said, "There seems to me to be more difficulty in this affair than I wish to try to resolve hastily. I will talk this over with the Reverend Abbot Brand, with my kinsman Sturla, and with my other friends."

Þorgils and Sturla both went off, calling on Abbot Brand to join them. Þorgils also called in Einar and Þórð, and the abbot called in his brother Heming and Böðvar of Bær. First the abbot asked about the reconciliation between Þorgils and Egil, and Þorgils told him about this. The abbot said it would be a good thing if the men of Borgarfjörð suffered greatly at Þorgils' hand, "Because they behaved badly when he was deserving of fair treatment at their hands."

Þorgils reported to the abbot the request from Þorvarð, together with all his arguments, and asked him to give wise counsel as to what should be done about these problems, "For I trust you most of all to show wisdom and good will in this situation."

The abbott answered quickly: "I will prevent you and all my kinsmen and friends from going into another man's lands with hostile intent, but neither Þorvarð nor you is to believe that I am not grieved by the slaying of my kinsman Odd, who was piled under a heap of stones like a fox or a thief; but it is forbidden me to take any part in plots against men's lives or in any other sort of strife. Nor is it a worse thing for you not to be entirely alone, as long as you think it unlikely you will live in peace. Now, what do you suggest, Böðvar?"

"I have little to add in such a situation," said Böðvar, "but that I wish Hrafn and Þorgils were good friends, though I would not have Eyjólf spared any misfortune whatsoever should that

be possible, for he has made himself thoroughly unpopular here in the district this summer. Nor do I have much hope that Þorgils will live peacefully even if he is in a position to do so."

Sturla now replied, "It seems dangerous to help Þorvarð and join him in marching against distant settlements or districts with a small force. Neither of us can count on the men of Borgarfjörð or the Dales, and our force is small and ill-equipped. Þorvarð has now shown us his whole company and cannot expect help from any other men. Therefore one can see how inadvisable it is to move with far too small a force into districts so much bigger. But what do you intend to ask of Þorvarð if you are willing to help him, on any terms, Þorgils?"

"It has been decided," said Þorgils, "that I will have Skagafjörð and the country north of Hrútafjörð whether Þorvard reaches a settlement with Hrafn and Eyjólf or whether their power is reduced by some other means."

The abbot replied, "I would rather grant possession of our family's land in Skagafjörð to you, Þorgils, than to those who now hold it. But I will not encourage your venture, for it seems to me it will not be easy to carry through."

The abbot now sprang up and bade God's will be done. Some of the men said that his zeal overcame him, for he was as red as blood and said as he walked away:

"It is hard when we have to bear seeing our noble kinsmen go unavenged before the sons of bóndis, and so my brother Orm would think if he were alive."

Þorgils now went to Þorvarð who again asked for help from Þorgils with promises of wealth and of all the honors he could give him; he promised to lay down his life if Þorgils ever needed this, and said he would never desert him as long as he lived, no matter with whom he had to deal.

Þorgils said: "Because of your entreaties, Þorvarð, your fair promises of support and other things, I will agree to go north if Sturla will follow me, and I will not leave you until this affair is resolved one way or another."

Sturla now answered, "I will follow you, kinsman, wherever you mean to go in this country, just as I have promised, no mat-

ter who is involved. But it seems to me very imprudent to make this expedition north with so small and so badly equipped a force, for some men have few weapons, others have none, nor are they well furnished with horses."

Þorgils said, "I know that you will act nobly, kinsman, and your advice seems to me highly necessary, for you are considered a very wise man. Moreover, you are drawn into this affair on account of harm which has not been compensated—for in the burning at Flugumýr you suffered the death of your son-in-law Hall. It seems to me therefore that Þorvarð must fully repay everyone who takes part in this expedition. I will ask Einar and my kinsman Þórð if they mean to join me in this expedition, but I think that I cannot release my followers or Þingmen from going with me."

Those said they wanted to go with Þorgils who thought he must grant them something in the way of reward if the expedition succeeded. Many said that Hrafn and Eyjólf had already been worsted, even if their hopes had sometimes been higher. Þorgils now spoke out for joining Þorvarð on whatever terms he asked.

"I will have Skagafjörð," he said, "and those areas west of there," if Þorvarð and his partners had the power to decide this—which seemed unlikely to most people—and if Þorvarð undertook no other agreement unless Þorgils showed that he approved and thought it honorable for him. This was now reported to Abbot Brand, Egil, and Böðvar. The abbot would not go along and said he would wholly oppose their venture,

"For harm will come to many innocent men on this expedition, and it will therefore not be fitting for me to give my consent to it; furthermore, it may be that I will be so moved by indignation against some men that if I say much in this affair I will not be as careful of my words as I should be."

Egil also refused to join them, on account of his friendship with Hrafn. Þorvarð agreed to everything that was asked of him; Þorgils and he shook hands and Sturla pronounced the agreement. Þorvarð promised his support to and kinship with Þorgils to the limit of his ability and for as long as they were both alive.

Their expedition to the north was then planned, and with this they parted. Þorgils rode home to Reykjaholt with thirty men; the abbot rode to Bær and Sturla to Ás. Þórð rode down through Reykjardal because he hoped to get horses there. Abbot Brand said that he would meet Þorgils and his men on the following day.

45

Rather late in the morning Þorgils rode from Reykjaholt and Egil rode some way with him. He gave him two brownish horses and they parted on friendly terms. Þorgils rode up to Kalmanstunga. When he learned that forces had been mustered, Nikulás had left the house and had gone out to the ness on business but had sent men north across Arnarvatnsheið to Hrafn and Eyjólf[38]—Magnús Atlason and eleven others, including Hermund standali and Björn Eiríksson.

Þorgils rode up to Öxnatunga and sent word over the mountain to Þórð. Sigfús in Fljótstunga gave Þorgils a byrnie. When Þórð knew nothing more than that Þorgils had ridden early that Hávafel very rapidly. He waited for them and it was the abbot and Böðvar. The abbot at once asked about Þorgils' route, but Þórð knew nothing more than that Þorgils had ridden early that day from Reykjaholt intending to go to Gilsbakki and there wait for the abbot. But when they arrived there Þorgils had gone.

The abbot said now, "I will not ride farther, for I see how things will go. Yesterday evening at our meeting I thought it unwise to make this expedition; still, anything once determined on does eventually come to pass and there is this hope—that this is not lightly undertaken. Your troop seems to me small and ill-equipped but it does not look very weak or marked for death. Take my greetings to my kinsman Þorgils now and tell him to spare innocent men as far as possible. It seems to me that what I hear about him will be of the greatest importance to me, and I will be extremely anxious about this expedition until I learn how it turns out. And I would have you, kinsman, support Þorgils well and always advise him for the best. I pray that God will always be your weapon and defense and Archbishop Tómas your

protection. But do not count on Þorvarð's courage, for I have a foreboding about how the agreement between Þorgils and Þorvarð will turn out: I think that Þorvarð is the one who will not keep his word."

They parted now and the abbot gave Þórð his blessing and bade him bear himself well. Þórð rode swiftly up through Síða until he reached Fljótstunga. Magnús Atlason was already there with the men Þorgils had left there. They told Þórð that Þorgils had ridden up to Öxnatunga and would wait for him there, and they all now rode swiftly to Öxnatunga. Þorgils was already there with all his company and he had some sleep. Þorgils now gave Þórð the byrnie known as Sigfússnaut.

Þorgils and Sturla had sent twelve men north across the heath under the leadership of Berg and Magnús Jónsson. Berg was a very fine horseman. Þorgils had discovered in Kalmanstunga that Nikulás had sent men out with news of them; they had started out at breakfast time and were to ride night and day until they reached Hrafn and Eyjólf. They also knew that Þorvarð had come from the east, that Þorgils and Sturla had arrived in Reykjaholt, and that men suspected they would ride north against Hrafn and Eyjólf. Nikulás assumed that Ásgrím Þorsteinsson would be at Hvamm in Vatnsdal, and they were to go there first. They had a poor choice of horses and proceeded only slowly, but Berg and his men rode swiftly across the heath and captured Nikulás' spies near Grímstungamannasel. They were at once bound and severely whipped. When Þorgils and Þorvarð came up the spies asked for quarter; this was granted and after that they went home. The troops rested there for a while.

The leaders then said that the men were to ride down through the district to Hvamm as swiftly as possible, so that news of their arrival would not precede them. The men who were at home at Hvamm saw men riding down through the district and thought they were certain this meant an attack. The mistress of the house, Ingun, had everything men could carry taken out to the church. Everyone was running about. The news from the west had reached Ásgrím of the Dales, that Þorgils and Sturla had ridden from home, and Ásgrím had straightaway

ridden from his home with what information he had; with him went Saxi mikli and Berg ósvífi. They did not stop until they met Hrafn and Eyjólf and told them what they had learned.

46

Þorgils and Þorvarð came into Hvamm with their troops, jumped down from their horses and at once ran to the church, but it was locked. Some men ran into the house but it was silent. Þorvarð bade them open up the church but Ingun spoke for those who were inside, saying that they would not unlock it. Then Þorvarð asked if Ásgrím bóndi were at home. Ingun said he was not there, "And," she added, "you will accept the priest's word for this."

The priest and all the homemen said he had ridden away but Þorvarð hardly believed them. Twice he made a run at the church and kicked the door so hard that it almost split in two. Þorgils and some others told him not to break the door. And when Ingun discovered that Þorgils Böðvarsson was at the head of the expedition she said she would unlock the church if Þorgils would promise quarter to those who were inside it. Þorgils promised quarter to Ingun and to all the homemen, and for all the livestock which had been led into the church. The church was now unlocked, and they searched through it but did not find Ásgrím, as was to be expected. The men now prepared to ride off. Ingun offered Þorgils and the men with him whatever food he wanted to eat but he would not accept it and the men now rode away.

Berg, Finnbjörn, and Ögmund had ridden up from Upper Marðargnúp over the neck of land to Svínadal. It was reported that two of Eyjólf's homemen had been in Grímstunga that night. They had fled the moment they saw the troops and were now riding down through the district. Finnbjörn and Ögmund managed to capture them on the neck of land in Svínadal; one of them was wounded and the other was beaten so that neither could go on from there. Finnbjörn and his group came to meet the troops near Blanda and reported what they had done; men were pleased with this.

Þorgils, Þorvarð, and Sturla now took counsel together. Men rode out to look for help but only a few would join them. Finn came from Eyvindarstaðir with three men, but they got no more west of Vatnsskarð. Spies were now sent out all the way north to Öxnadalsheið, while the troops moved forward during the night, north over Vatnsskarð to Skagafjörð, and north across Jökulsá to a place called Langamýr. There they dismounted, for the men were very sleepy. Next they decided that Finnbjörn and Ögmund were to ride up to Hörgárdalsheið and see that no one led men across the heath to or from the north; they were to meet with all the spies and keep an eye on all the routes. Þorvarð was to muster men in Sæmundarhlíð and Langaholt, and he also sent men up to Tunga. Þorgils had a troop gathered from Blönduhlíð and himself rode with nine men to Hof to meet his kinsman Broddi. He left Einar behind to look after the troops and find provisions for them. Sturla was also left behind with his company.

Arnór Einarsson had ridden north with Ásgrím, Sigurð Eldjárnsson and Sigurð Illugason, Jón of Lýtingsstaðir and some other bóndis. When Ásgrím reached the north Hrafn and Eyjólf immediately began to muster forces throughout the district and had messages sent throughout all of Öxarfjörð. Men came in rather reluctantly, but still they did gather a force, all well equipped. They had between two and three hundred men; but all the prominent bóndis in Eyjafjörð stayed at home. Hrafn and Eyjólf stationed their forces in Eyjafjörð and tried to get some information, but learned nothing.

47

Þorgils rode out to Hof, as was written earlier, to meet his kinsman Broddi. Broddi was married to Þjóðbjörg Arnór's daughter, Þorgils' aunt. He was given a warm welcome there. He asked Broddi for help in this affair. Broddi said he had not the courage for this, saying he was a very old man, had no weapons, and furthermore loathed fighting. He told Þorgils about the wretched treatment the men of the district had suffered at the hands of

Eyjólf and Hrafn since the battle at Geldingaholt, and said he thought they had lost almost all heart for an expedition against Hrafn and Eyjólf. Some had been cowed by robbery, some by flogging, and nearly everyone by some sort of ill-treatment.

"Furthermore, they have taken away all the weapons and all the horses which are of any use, and it seems to me you are hardly likely to find much support even if your prospects did not seem pretty slim. It has become clear that they are both bold and likely to win, so that it now looks as if no one can bring them down. If God wants what we do, then their tyranny will be quickly overthrown. My suggestion is that you ask your kinsman Ásbjörn Illugason in Viðvík for help. He is considered the most notable bóndi in this district and has the strongest cause against them both on account of robbery and assault. Also, he is a young man and a good horseman."

Þorgils rode away late in the evening. Broddi now sent word to Aron at Hól and to Þorgils in Unadal that they were to join him, saying he would provide them with weapons, and he sent word to Guðmund Fálkason in Ósland. He offered Þorgils five shields but refused to join in with him. Þorgils now rode to Viðvík and had Ásbjörn called out. He told him how matters stood with his expedition, that troops had come from the west and they thought they needed help; he asked Ásbjörn to join his expedition. Ásbjörn enumerated many difficulties in the situation:

"I am ill provided with horses," he said, "and have no weapons; but there is sufficient need for this expedition that I shall therefore not stay behind, no matter how ill prepared I am. But why has Broddi not come? All the bóndis will decide as Broddi does."

"He is not here," said Þorgils, "because he is an old man, not a good horseman, and cannot take part in any fighting."

"That is not so," said Ásbjörn. "He is abler than many younger men; however, my going does not depend on him. It's true that Hrafn's and Eyjólf's injustices have not touched him as deeply as they have me, but obviously my support is of less importance to you than Broddi's decision."

Ásbjörn now ordered his horse made ready while he dressed himself swiftly. He had no weapons other than one wretched

sword and a buckler. Þorgils gave him the byrnie which Broddi had given him, and they now rode together up through the district calling up any men they found.

Þorgils turned up to Langamýr to his forces. He sent Þórð Hítnesing and Magnús Atlason to gather men around Blönduhlíð and come to meet with him by mid-afternoon on Saturday at Silfrastaðir. They called all the men together there but could get only a few weapons. However, they bade them come to meet Þorgils at Silfrastaðir. As each one came into the homestead there—including every old warrior who still had the power to speak—he had this one thing to say: God should crush the tyranny of Hrafn and Eyjólf. When they reached Silfrastaðir Þorgils was already there and gave them a warm welcome. When Þorgils knew that some of the men had come without any weapons he told Geir auðgi to provide them with arms and himself accompany them. Geir refused to join the expedition and rejected every offer concerning this, saying that he had already suffered his share of destruction, and,

"If I get involved in these difficulties both life and property will then be in danger," and that they would not find they had a dolt to deal with where he, Geir, was concerned.

The more Þorgils pressed him for help the more Geir backed off, and finally Þorgils took to threats and harsh words. Sturla then proposed that Geir make some concessions but he answered obstinately. Þorgils' men had driven in some stud-horses which Geir owned, a fawn-colored horse and some mares. They were standing each on one side of the stallion when they began to quarrel. Þorgils began to curse and abuse Geir in every way and Geir retorted furiously. Þorgils raised his buckler meaning to strike him, but Geir dropped to the ground. Ásbjörn Illugason shot his buckler over Geir's head and the blow fell on the buckler. Men now told Geir to give in, saying that nothing else would avail. Geir decided then to lend Þorgils some horses, weapons, and a heavy, strong coat-of-mail which Sturla Þórðarson had worn to the battle at Þverá.

On Saturday evening Þorgils and his men rode away and up through Norðrárdal, where they met their troops. Þorvarð, Finn-

björn, and Ögmund had arrived with their company and they met each other near Hökustaðir. Finnbjörn and his men said they suspected that information had reached Eyjafjörð across the mountains from Hof in Upper Goðdal. Þorgils and Þorvarð now rode to Hörgárdalsheið and had almost seventy men from Skagafjörð; Ásbjörn was in command but they all belonged to Þorgils' force. On Sunday morning they came down into Hörgárdal, where the men were spread out among the homesteads. In his introduction to Volume I of these ET A ET Professor Þorgils rode to Þufnavellir. When the men had eaten, the whole force assembled and it numbered nearly two hundred. Men shrdlu cmfwyp vbgkqj cmfwyp shrdlu etaoin xzfiffffffi vbgkqjwf got weapons for themselves as best they could. It was reported to Hrafn and Eyjólf that they were in Eyjafjörð and had a large body of chosen troops.

The men now rode on until they reached Glæsibær, where there was a sheephouse. They rode into the sheephouse pasture, dlu cmfwyp vbgkqj shrdlu cmfwyp etaoin shrdlu cmfwyp vbgkq dismounted, and turned their horses loose. Þorvarð now had the troops all assemble in one place while the chieftains talked privately together for a time. Þorvarð then spoke; he began by asking that God protect him and all the men who had joined his forces.

"And now, Þorgils," he said, "I want to thank you, and Sturla also, for the help I am counting on you to give me."

He described next what hostility he had had to suffer from Hrafn and Eyjólf, in that they had killed his brother Odd and those other men who had also lost their lives at Geldingaholt and who, Þorvarð claimed, had been his Þingmen. Next he explained "how necessity has forced me into this expedition," if he were not to appear a laughingstock or a paltry coward; he said he had learned that Eyjólf and Hrafn were in Eyjafjörð with a large and well equipped force,

"And it seems to me more than likely that it won't be long before there's a battle. It shows great magnanimity on the part of those men who have no good to repay me and no evil to repay me and no evil to repay others, and who are not affected by this affair, that they want to fight on my side if need be, so slight a chance as we have. I have all this to thank my kinsmen Þorgils and Sturla for, and I hope that no one has come here who does

not fully intend to serve his leaders loyally and courageously. And I will also, if I have the chance, reward all those who stand by me in my need. My advice is that men should now mark[39] their steel hats, arm themselves, and be as wary as possible, for we can all expect an attack now that we have entered unfamiliar territory. If there is anyone who knows inside himself that he will not fight even if it should be necessary, let him speak now rather than later. I have pledged myself to enter into only such a reconciliation as will content Þorgils, both on my account and on his. Eyjólf and I have in many respects got on well together and I am not averse to a peaceful settlement, if one can be arranged in which I am seen to come off honorably; but I would rather risk a battle, though it looks as if we are of unequal strength, for I expect that the difference between our situations will be decisive. I ask each man now to repeat his Pater Noster three times and then let us all pray to God to give us good counsel. Let each man guard himself, but may God protect us all."

Both Sturla and Þorgils now spoke to their men, each bidding them be resolute whatever happened and give good account of themselves:

"Þorvard has suffered a deep loss in his family with the slaying of his brother Odd; though he himself was not present, he is the chief prosecutor for the case. And it is my intention to help him in this expedition with complete loyalty. That man alone will be doing what I wish who fights to the best of his ability, and I will reward every one of my men according to what he does."

Most of the men promised this with a good will. They now mounted their horses when they were ready and the force rode in close formation in along Eyjafjörð. As they were coming in along Eyjafjörð the bóndi Björn from Kropp came up to them. He said that Hrafn and Eyjólf had ridden north from the district to Fjnóskadal, and that men reported they would ride all the way to Reykjadal or Öxarfjörð to meet the forces which they expected to come from there. The men did not put complete trust in what he said, because Björn was somewhat sly and was

considered a rather malicious man. They now rode across Eyjafjarðará to the island which lies in the elbow of Eyjafjörð. The area is wide and has good pasture. They sent sentinels out on horseback both across the district and north to the heath, while other men looked for cattle as well as pots and firewood. Men lay down there for the night and slept with their weapons to hand.

48

When Hrafn and Eyjólf had reliable information that Þorgils and his forces had come from the west, Eyjólf rode out to Gásar to a ship there, intending to procure weapons from the Norwegians. Ingimund Arnórsson, who was living on Fagrey in Breiðafjörð, had arrived; he was a kinsman and foster brother of Hrafn, a big and powerful man. Eyjólf brought him greetings from Hrafn and the message that Hrafn wanted him to come to meet him in Eyjafjörð and give him help, even if it came to a battle before this affair was finished.

Eyjólf said Hrafn was certain, "That you will come to him the moment his message reaches you, because he has chosen as messenger a man whom Ingimund would not distrust."

Ingimund said, "I am not spoiling for a fight. I have spent this winter with Sturla and have liked him greatly. I will not join any force opposed to him; therefore I will not not join with you."

Eyjólf said, "You appear to be of less worth than he assumed."

"Yes," said Ingimund, "in many ways I must seem to you ignoble, but this I will have a care for—that Hrafn suffers no injury from me."

Eyjólf said, "You seem to me a most despicable person in every respect."

With that they parted.

Ingimund's two brothers, Grani and Óláf, had joined Þorgils' and Sturla's troops; Grani stole away at Arnarvatnsheið when they heard of Hrafn's approach. Óláf said he would never have left home had he known they would have Hrafn to deal with, but said that whatever happened he would now serve Þorgils as long as he had the nerve.

When the bóndis in the district learned of the strife, they went to meet Abbot Eyjólf and asked him to mediate. The second day of the week the priest Þorstein tittling came to Þorgils and his men. He had studied at Stafaholt,[40] so he knew Þorgils and Sturla and all the men from the west. Þorgils and Sturla went at once to talk with him, greeted him warmly and asked where he had spent the night. He said he had been in Draflastaðir overnight. They asked what he knew about Eyjólf and Hrafn and he said they had ridden north to Fnjóskadal early that night.

"They have been," he said, "at Vaðlaheið; from there they saw a troop of men from the west riding in along the fjord,"—which seemed to them a large group, while their own force they thought not large enough to oppose the others, for they had put no reliance on the men of the district; he said they meant to ride north to Öxarfjörð and gather men to fill out their troops, and would straightway turn around to attack as soon as they were strong enough or saw a chance to do so if they were pursued.

Most of the men readily accepted this and thought there was hope the battle might be avoided, and men then be able to move freely about the district seeing to their necessary activities. Most men trusted what he said because he declared loudly that it was true. But no man believed as fully as Þórð Hítnesing that he would not lie.

Sturla now replied: "In this case I am of a different mind: I think he is lying about everything, and I do not believe that one word he says is true."

Þorvarð and Þorgils agreed with Sturla. The priest then rode off. A little later they saw a great many men riding in along the mountain and taking the upper road down into the district. This attracted their attention, for it seemed to them the others were coming from the north and one might get some news from them if they were not the enemy's men. Magnús Jónsson was appointed to meet them with six of Þorvarð's men—Þórð Hítnesing led eight of Þorgils' men, and four of Sturla's men went along under the leadership of Þorbjörn nef. Most of them were not eager

for this journey. They rode up over the moors and on toward the others; the others rode slowly and when they met, there were Abbot Eyjólf with some monks and other clerics. They asked the abbot what he knew about Eyjólf and Hrafn. He said that they were lying in wait up on Rauðahjalli above Kaupang.

"And they intend," he said, "to hurl themselves upon your forces the moment they have a chance. I have sent men to Þorgils and his forces to tell them to be as careful as possible and never relax their guard, and I myself will come to you directly. I rode out to them to try to effect a reconciliation, but it seemed to me that though they did not reject this outright, still they were rather reluctant."

The abbot now rode on, but Þórð and the others rode to Þverá lítli where they ate their dinner. After this they rode to meet Þorgils. Hrafn and Eyjólf had seen Magnús and Þórð on their journey and had selected a group of men to ride in on them if there was an opportunity. Svarthöfði Dufgusson led this group. But it all came to nothing because Þorgils and his men caught up with the main force earlier than they expected. A little later the abbot reached Þórunnarey and told Þorvarð and Þorgils about the peace talks he had had with Hrafn and Eyjólf. He said they had offered to submit the whole case between them and Þorvarð to an impartial judge, but with the proviso that government of the district, exile from the country, and loss of any of the areas which Þórð Sighvatsson had turned over to them would lie outside the arbitration. They discussed this at length. Þorvarð was not averse to the agreement, but made the condition that their case should not come before a judge, that Eyjólf should go to Norway and release control of his districts, and Hrafn should keep his own districts in the West Fjords but never spend any time south of Gilsfjörð.

The abbot said: "There is a great difference between these proposals. They think that Odd got what he deserved because he acted wrongly in the district when he seized goods by robbery and threatened attacks. Eyjólf announces that he has the king's letter and appointment in Skagafjörð and, further, believes he has a substantial case to bring against Þorgils and Sturla on

account of their assault, while he himself is innocent. And they also maintain," said the abbot, "that their whole case should be submitted to the king's judgment, and that either Hrafn and Eyjólf or both of them should go to Norway one summer, and Sturla or Þorgils or both of them should go the following summer, and Þorvarð on his own account, and that they should then all accept the king's decisions about a reconciliation and about appointments to districts."

But Þorgils and Þorvarð certainly did not want to accept this. They demanded that Eyjólf go abroad the same summer and give up the lands in the north. Þorvarð did not refuse to go abroad in the summer, if it was convenient for him; Þorgils said he would never leave the country unless the king ordered him to. Sturla said he had done nothing as far as he knew which necessitated his fleeing the country; it seemed to him that they had been rather hostile to him during the summer, and he had no great eagerness for a reconciliation. The abbot told them that he thought their enemies' equipment far superior to theirs and that it would be very dangerous to fight against them: "But that," he said, "will be the result if there is no reconciliation."

Sturla said, "Perhaps the danger is not as great as men fear. I have a foreboding that the days of Eyjólf's life are now numbered."

Þorgils and Þorvarð now declared that with God's help they would risk a battle if they could not reach a reconciliation which was acceptable. With this reply the abbot went to Hrafn and Eyjólf, who would not agree to this settlement. Eyjólf did not refuse to go abroad in the summer but was unwilling to give up the district unless it was the king's will. Hrafn, however, was in every respect more averse to a reconciliation and more eager to fight. They thought they had reliable information that Þorgils' force was small and poorly equipped. Furthermore, they had always found it easy to fight and thought that it would be so again. Therefore they sent this message with the abbot: the two groups were to meet each other on the plain north of Þverá and fight to a decisive conclusion; each side was to take up a position equally far forward, and neither was to creep up on the other.

The abbot now went back to Þorgils and his men and reported that no reconciliation could be effected on their terms:

"They offer you a fight to the finish on a chosen field on the island of Þverá."

Þorgils and his men chose to fight. The abbot said, "Both sides are now choosing the most dangerous path. But I," he said, "am pledged to let Hrafn know what has been decided."

But when this message reached Hrafn and Eyjólf they were pleased with it and with their forces. Hrafn rose and spoke to his men: he told them the moment had come when a battle could soon be expected; he bade all the men speak their minds now rather than later, "If there are some men who do not want to fight, we will not blame anyone who announces now that he will not fight, but let no one run away from us in the moment of danger."

Auðun of Selárdal said, "I wouldn't do that though I were marked for death."

But Eyjólf replied, "My guess is that the men won't fight manfully no matter what they have promised, and I should not find it against the grain to refuse to risk much at this time. Furthermore, I think it not certain we will win against such high-born men in so great a battle, even though we are fortunate in making a swift and surprise attack. But I do not intend to desert you today, Hrafn, even if we run into danger, and I have every belief that you will not desert me."

Hrafn said he would not run away or leave him in the lurch in the company of such valiant men.

"For it seemed to me that we have ventured into very great danger and have done well enough so far. Therefore I expect this good fortune will lead us on to victory as it has before, and will not turn away from us yet."

They now prepared to ride down; they had a bold company well equipped. Most of the men were eager to fight.

50

It is now time to report that Þorgils, Þorvarð, and Sturla ordered their troops to make ready for battle, each man the

best he could, and this was hard to say, because they were so short of weapons. The men of the East Fjords had some shields, but the men from the west had only one. Þorvarð again addressed the troops and again promised his friendship to all the men who would fight with him. It was the day before the Feast of St. Þorlák in the summer. Vows were now made to Almighty God and to St. Þorlák the Bishop that all those men who came through alive would fast for a day and a night before the Feast of St. Þorlák in the following summer, and would recite the Psalms; some made vows of fasting for their whole lives if they were victorious—and they confirmed these vows by shaking hands. Men now went to Confession and then made ready; they mounted and rode up on the plain towards Þverá. There they dismounted and tied their horses. Sturla chose a position where they could fight beneath their shields, where he thought they could easily get at stones, but which was yet level ground under their feet. The men were drawn up in battle formation: Þorgils' men were on the western flank and he placed Einar Halldórsson and his cousin Þórð in command of them. There too were those men who had joined them from Skagafjörð, under the command of Ásbjörn Illugason. Þorgils chose nine men from the troop and was himself the tenth for the group which was to move wherever men seemed to need help most gravely. Sturla was in command of the central part of the troops and Ögmund Helgason was with him. Þorvarð led the eastern flank with the men of the East Fjords.

Abbot Eyjólf wanted to try again for a reconciliation and negotiate between them, but Þorgils said this would come to nothing and they themselves would now reach an understanding. The abbot called out to all the monks and other clerics and bade them ride away,

"For there is nothing we can do here."

51

Hrafn and Eyjólf now rode down from the ledge on the mountainside, dismounted, and tied their horses. Then they drew their forces up in battle formation, raised their battle cry

and charged down. At this moment a man in Þorvarð's and Þorgils' forces fell unconscious; his name was Þórð krabbi and he was the son of Sigfús. When he came to, he told people he thought he had seen an unclean spirit before the troops of Hrafn and Eyjólf and that he had not been able to endure the sight, so had fainted.

Sturla reports in his Þverá-verses that Þorgils was first to join battle:

> 3. I saw you, Þorgils,
> Stir men to battle—
> Steel-helmeted hero
> In sword's point of peril.

The troops now joined battle. Hrafn and his men ran down against the position where Einar and Þórð headed Þorgils' company. Those who were in the front ranks made a brave resistance, and those who were farther back hurled stones so that Hrafn and his men found it hard to maintain their attack; Hrafn fell back and then withdrew to the position Helgi's sons were occupying. Þorgils himself was in the middle of the ranks near Sturla, because that was the most difficult area; they fought superbly, though it seemed that no other position could more easily be attacked than that where they stood.

When Hrafn and his men now fell back before Einar and Þórð they urged the ranks to press forward and bade them take heart. Þórð and Einar then swung their wing around against the enemy and both sides suffered some injuries. Hrafn drew back and turned to face Þorvarð with the men from the East Fjords; Auðun was on one side of him and Eyjólf Eyjólfsson on the other, with Hrafn's other followers; they all fought valiantly. It was a hard encounter. Hrafn at once struck at Þorvarð and Þorvarð at Hrafn, so that each struck the other in the mouth; each was wounded but Þorvarð more so. Þorvarð now drove a spear with both hands against Auðun and struck him in the body so hard that he fell to the ground and his feet flew up over his head. He was so well clothed that the blow did not

penetrate his body; nevertheless, men believed he was wounded to death.

Þorgils was always where the fighting was most severe, and his men fought to the very best of their ability. No one thought of pressing forward against his position; men retreated before him because he laid about him so vigorously and powerfully, striking furious blows. He struck one man so that his shoulders hit the ground but he too was so well clothed that the blow did not penetrate and he later got to his feet. When Þorvarð and Hrafn were separated Hrafn turned to face the men of the East Fjords. Hrafn and his men attacked the others so hard that they gave way and the enemy broke through their ranks. Some of the Easterners fell there.

There was a man named Ögmund prjón, from Fagranes,[41] who was in Þorvarð's troop. He attacked Hrafn as if he had nothing in the world to do but strike him with all his might. Hrafn had other men to defend himself from, but he struck Ögmund so that the blow ran down from his steel hat right through him; this was a fatal blow and he fell to the ground. Óláf from Burstarfel also died there, and still others among the Easterners. Some of Hrafn's men also fell.

Men say that before Þorvarð was wounded by Hrafn he was hard to deal with, but that after that those of his opponents who stood farthest away were happiest. The troops of Eyjólf and his companions now began to fall away; Hrafn stole off from the battle, then Ásgrím Þorsteinsson, thirty men in all. Hrafn saw that there was no longer any hope of victory, so he went off to find his horse; he got his foot in the stirrup, intending to mount, but could not manage it because he was weakened by exhaustion. Þorstein hvítakoll now lifted him up: he was their horse-boy and had not been in the battle. They now rode away.

52

Eyjólf Þorsteinsson commanded the center of his and Hrafn's forces at the beginning of the battle and fought well and valiantly. For a long time no one advanced past his position for he stood firm, as did the men with him. Eyjólf had been hit in the

chest by a stone during the fighting and therefore found it rather hard to breathe; after he was hit his actions were weaker than they would otherwise have been. The fighting was now very fierce for a time; men pressed Eyjólf hard and he was severely hampered by weariness. It was at about this time that Hrafn's and Eyjólf's men took to flight. Eyjólf wanted to mount his horse but as he took hold of the stirrup, intending to mount, Jörund gest ran at him; he grabbed Eyjólf by the neck and pulled him back, then hurled him to the ground. He threw himself down on top of Eyjólf and tore off his steel hat. Þorvarð and his men now came up and asked who that was he held underneath him, and Jörund replied: "I am perfectly certain that it is Eyjólf Þorsteinsson."

Þorvarð now went up, took his spear in both hands and struck Eyjólf. The spear went into his mouth and back through his neck into the ground. A man named Kimbi struck Eyjólf in the head with his broad-axe and men were uncertain which was the earlier wound. Kimbi was killed later and men say that this happened entirely at Hrafn's instigation.

53

At almost the same time as these events which have just been reported, it happened as was written earlier that Hrafn rode away west across Skjálgsdalsheið. In short, he did not stop until he met Þorleif who had come north to Arnarvatnsheið with a troop.

Now it is to be told that those men who were left behind at the Þverá battle tried to escape, some to the church and some to the chapel. Some were captured and stripped of their weapons and clothes. Some asked for quarter. Þorgils was quite willing to give quarter. Þorgils met Auðun Tómasson in flight from the plain and Auðun asked if Þorgils would grant him quarter. He said he would be glad to do so and asked if he was at all wounded. Auðun said he was not wounded, only utterly exhausted. He said he wanted to stay there and rest. Þorgils assigned his brother Ingimund to stay behind with him and Jón

of the Dales to watch out for him. Auðun sat down on the bank of the river and said he was thirsty; three times Ingimund brought him something to drink. Then Auðun sank back, and a little later he died.

Þorgils rode to the homestead up at Þverá lítli. There were many men in the chapel there. Svarthöfði Dufgusson had got in under the chapel wall; he was mutilated by his wounds, slashed across the face. He begged earnestly for quarter and Þorgils granted him this. Óláf Óláfsson was also captured, and asked for quarter, but Þorgils was somewhat reluctant about this. Óláf now asked Þórð Hítnesing to ask quarter for him and Þorgils eventually agreed.

Þorgils and Þorvarð then rode up through the district to Munka-Þverá, wanting to find out if Hrafn had possibly come to the church there. When they arrived, the abbot had reached home and said Hrafn was not there. They rode back again, all the way to Þórunnarey, where the company assembled and where they spent the rest of that night.

On St. Þorlák's Day they rode up to the island, where the troops had taken their positions, and saw what had happened. The bodies of those who had fallen were still lying there though some had been carried away. These men died there. Eyjólf Þorsteinsson, Eyjólf Eyjólfsson, Auðun Tómasson, Halldór of Skinnastaðir, and Þorkel mikli. In their companies eight or nine men in all had died. Among the men of the East Fjords these died: Ögmund prjón, Óláf of Burstarfel, and still others. Sixteen or seventeen men died in the battle and many were wounded.

They had begun to fight between six and nine o'clock in the evening,[42] but it was after sunset when the ranks broke in flight. Many men were then stripped of both weapons and clothes and great damage was done. For a long time at the beginning of the battle it seemed to Eyjólf and his men that they were more likely to come off the winners but the end of it was, as many people know, that Eyjólf died here and those who expected defeat were victorious.

In the morning Þorvarð and Þorgils rode up to Grund. Abbot Eyjólf with many of his clerics arrived and men were then given

absolution. The bóndi Finnbjörn had been wounded in the battle, struck in the throat. The wound appeared slight but was serious. Finnbjörn was rash enough to travel with Þorvarð during the summer but his wound caused his death. He died in the autumn on Michaelmas Day and his death was a great loss to men.

54

On St. Þorlák's Day a meeting was called at Djúpadalsá; many men of the district came to this and discussed the death of the bóndi Eyjólf. Þorvarð asked the bóndis to accept him as their chieftain and Þorgils and Sturla supported this. But there was no audible assent. Þorvarð then called for a decision from the bóndis Þorvarð of Saurbær, Hall of Möðruvellir, Örnólf of Miklagarð, and many others. Þorvarð of Saurbær answered first, saying he could offer only one man's advice: "I can put up with a chieftain if he is already here, but best of all would be to have none."

Hall and his companions said that they would not make the decision without consulting the other bóndis, and the bóndis now conferred privately. When they had talked for a while they returned to the meeting and told Þorvarð they had agreed they would not accept him as chieftain in the district,

"For Þorvarð seems to us a most arrogant man, much in need of money, and with many difficult cases yet to resolve. Let us accept what King Hákon and Þórð Sighvatsson decided on."

When Þorvarð realized that he had no chance here, he and his men rode out of the district and west to Skagafjörð. Þorvarð stayed overnight at Silfrastaðir and Þorgils stayed at Flatatunga. A meeting was then called at Vallalaug and most of the bóndis came. During the day when they were riding down along the banks of Jökulsá Þorvarð and Þorgils talked about the support which Þorvarð had promised Þorgils in his bid for the district of Skagafjörð. But Þorvarð held back now, saying that no one would pay attention to his words. Finnbjörn was present at this. Þorvarð and Þorgils were somewhat at odds with each other and Finnbjörn said, "You have great and vigorous support from

Þorgils to repay; he has won great honor with you and you have made him fair promises."

And he directed some further remarks to him; Þorvarð said he would keep his word to Þorgils in everything, as he had promised; he would help him to the best of his ability, so far as lay in his power. But it seemed to him that Þorgils had not contributed much in Eyjafjörð. They rode on to the meeting and a large group had already arrived. Þorgils asked the bóndis to accept him as chieftain in the district; he spoke of his relationship to Kolbein by direct descent and considered himself best entitled to control of Skagafjörð. Broddi was the first to answer, saying that if he had to serve any chieftain he would prefer Þorgils most of all, but it would be better to serve none if he could rule himself. More than most others Sturla and Ásbjörn supported this. At this moment Þórarin kaggi arrived. He had been sent by Bishop Heinrek, and now read out a letter which said that the bishop proclaimed the excommunication of Þorgils and Þorvarð and all those men who had been in the battle at Þverá, and had entered that region with hostile intentions against Eyjólf and Hrafn. He forbade any man to give Þorgils shelter in the district and threatened with excommunication and severe punishment anyone who was convicted of doing so. The end of it was that the bóndis would under no circumstances accept Þorgils, nor did Þorvarð now push his claim. Þorgils told the bóndis that he still did not consider the district lost, and that he would try to win it as soon as he was in a position to do so, for he did not care what the bishop said. Broddi observed that anything could be accomplished if it were done by force. So this meeting came to an end and Broddi and Þorgils talked privately for a long time.

From the west came word that Hrafn had gone to meet Þorleif, that they had a large force and that men from Borgarfjörð were in it. It was also reported that Hrafn had had men gathered from the Dales and it seemed dangerous now to ride to the west. Þorgils asked Þorvarð to ride west with him and offered to accompany him through Borgarfjörð to Bláskógaheið. Þorvarð thought he did not have enough horses and in every way excused himself from accompanying Þorgils to the West Fjords, but he

invited him to ride to the East Fjords with as many men as he wished and stay there until their case was resolved. Þorgils now asked Finnbjörn to ride west with him and stay there with six other men, but Finnbjörn thought he was not fit to travel because of the wound he had received, and was too weak. So he refused.

Þorgils and Þorvarð separated in Vatnsskarð and their parting was courteous. Þorvarð again thanked Þorgils for his help and offered the fairest promises for the future. Þorgils replied to these coolly. Þorgils rode west over Vatnsskarð and when he reached Langadal he was met by the same news about Þorleif and Hrafn that he had heard earlier. Þorgils sent Þórð Hítnesing and eleven others to ride across the mountain above all the habitations and come down to meet him in Haukadalsskarð, "While I myself will travel through the populated districts."

Þórð was to come to meet Þorgils if he heard that any troops were being assembled. Þórð and his group rode on until they reached the upper end of Vatnsdalsbotn. There they met Gellir Pálsson, Lýting Arngeirsson, and Sigmund Gestsson—they had been sent by Þorleif to get information about the movement of Þorgils and Þorvarð. They greeted each other in a friendly way and exchanged their news. The men of Borgarfjörð said that Hrafn had met them on Arnarvatnsheið and asked Þorleif to ride north with them against Þorgils and Þorvarð, but Þorleif had refused to ride into unfamiliar country with his followers; he told Hrafn he would ride to Borgarfjörð and promised to defend him there, along with the Borgfirðings, if an attack were made there. Hrafn rejected this, they said, and rode home to Sauðafel: "And we think that he may have a fairly large body of men there."

With this they parted and Þórð and his men rode to Miðfjörð where they tried to get horses for their journey. After this they rode toward Haukadalsskarð and by midnight came to the place where Þorgils was with his company, all asleep. When they rode up they made a great deal of noise and the men woke up. There was a wind from the southeast; they had set their spears upright in the ground; and they were drunk for sleep. Einar bóndi was first to spring up; he snatched his spear and cried out: "Devils

are riding in on us here. Get on your feet and let us all defend ourselves bravely!"

Þórð said, "Men are riding in, not devils."

Then Einar recognized the men. Þorgils jumped up as did some of the others. Þórð reported the news he had learned. Þorgils and his men rode off as soon as they were ready, until they reached Vestliðaeyr. They rested there for some time. The men remarked that they thought it not advisable to ride through such well-populated areas as these, but Þorgils said he had no intention of dodging Hrafn's horns, so that he would have no chance to meet him if he wanted to. Sturla said that Hrafn would not attack at this time since he had recently found himself so inferior. Hrafn was at home in Sauðafel and observed Þorgils' journey. There was a good deal of talk about an attack at this time but they held themselves in check. Þorgils and his men rode to Rauðamelsheið in the evening. The kinsmen took affectionate leave of one another here; Þorgils invited Sturla to stay with him at Stað but Sturla rode home to Hítardal. They remained quietly at home now for the summer.

Hrafn was most of the time at Sauðafel, and though there was neither reconciliation nor peace among the men still they were free so to speak from attack. Sturla rode west to Saurbær shortly afterwards and Hrafn went to Borgarfjörð. Sturla stayed in the west for a little while and then rode back home.

55

Þorgils Böðvarsson rode away from home in Stað two days before the Feast of the Virgin Mary. He assigned Einar to take care of the district because he did not expect to return within the year. He sent word to his cousin Þórð to join him and they met at Rauðamel.

There was a man named Sigurð Grímsson who was known as snók; he had a home in southern Rauðamel. When he knew that Þorgils had come to Rauðamel he ran west to Sauðafel with the news, and Hrafn at once had men called up. Þorgils was riding with nineteen men. Sturla and he had agreed on a meeting at Vestliðaeyr in the evening. Þorgils and his men rode in there

at sunset and Sturla arrived a little later. It was then quite dark. They rode in through the shallow water. Þorgils thought it inadvisable to continue their journey across Haukadalsskarð, for he knew that Hrafn would get news of their expedition. He rode now to Laxárdal while Sturla set out for Saurbær. It was then so dark that no one could see the man next to him if there was any distance between them. Berg happened to be riding somewhat farther ahead. When he and his group became aware, as they were riding towards a stream with steep banks, that there were men on the other side, Berg came to a halt and waited for Þorgils, bidding his men be still. When Þorgils came up he bade his men make ready to advance no matter what lay ahead. But Berg and Þórð thought it best to know what this might be. Þorgils asked who they were on the other side of the brook and they replied it was the bóndi Björn drumb of Hjarðarholt.

Some of Þorgils' men who had ridden forward under cover of darkness now rode on to Miðfjörð that evening and then north to Skagafjörð. Hrafn had mustered his forces and expected Þorgils to attack; but neither attacked the other at this time. When Þorgils reached Skagafjörð he rode first to Viðvík to Ásbjörn, who had a large and costly household but was not well supplied with necessities. There was a man named Brand Ölviðarson who was then living on a part of the land at little expense. They tried to get provisions from Aron karlsungi and Geir auðgi but got nothing from either of them. Word now came from the bishop, who proclaimed excommunication and the wrath of God. The bishop forbade all men to associate with them or offer them any hospitality. Still, he said men were to offer food to Þorgils rather than be robbed, but they were then to give the scraps to the dogs.

Þorgils now went out to Viðvík and took over Ásbjörn's and Brand's place and they became his homemen. Þorgils called a meeting at Vallalaug. All the bóndis of the district came to it and Þorgils asked them to accept him as chieftain. The bóndis brought up the many difficulties there were: the bishop's interdict, and also their expectations that there would be strife so long as the great quarrels in which Þorgils was involved were

not settled. Broddi suggested that the bóndis should accept Þorgils, "For I believe," he said, "that you will then soon be rid of him."

The bóndis said it would be very costly to have him there since he had come empty-handed. Broddi said, "One can't foresee everything. The bishop and Þorgils will soon be reconciled, and anyway the men of Skagafjörð have always maintained a chieftain at their expense."

Þorgils said it seemed of little importance to them to accept him as leader instead of Eyjólf and Hrafn, but the end of the matter was that most men agreed to accept him as chieftain. Next, men discussed their contributions. Broddi suggested that each man should contribute by paying a sheep-tax.

Þorgils now settled down in Viðvík, but the bishop had the church locked up and the interdict proclaimed against them. Þorgils held many meetings and at each meeting the bóndis of the area conceded the district to him and no one spoke against him. The sheep-tax was called in throughout the whole district from as far as Hrútafjörð, and men were willing to pay this. But a very great enmity developed between the bishop and Þorgils.

56

At Viðvík there was great merriment and good-will; they had games and a great many people attended. One Sunday there was a big dance and a host of people came to this. The priest Hámund from Hólar had held services during the day at Miklabær in Óslandshlíð; he then rode to Viðvík to the dance and stayed there for the games. His dancing was greatly admired. But when he returned home to Hólar the bishop drove him out of the church with abusive words and refused to see him. When Þorgils learned of this he invited the priest to stay with him: the priest Hámund reported this to his friends and the bishop then offered him a reconciliation on the entreaties of the people, but things were never afterwards the same between them. Hámund stayed at Hólar with the bishop for a short time but after that he moved to the East Fjords. There were many false rumors there and many disturbances.

Next it is to be told that Bishop Heinrek went from his home to the northern districts in the autumn. At that time Þorvarð Þórarinsson came with Finnbjörn Helgason from the East Fjords. Þorvarð sent word to Þorgils that they were to meet in Svarfaðardal. Þorvarð called meetings all around the countryside trying to win acceptance but he did not succeed. Þorgils then rode north over Heljardalsheið and met Þorvarð at Grund in Svarfaðardal. They discussed their difficulties and the damnation which the bishop had pronounced on Þorgils and his men, and in some degree on all of them. They decided to ride into the district to meet the bishop when he traveled south from his see and to ask him for a reconciliation. Þorvarð was in very good spirits and showed great friendliness to his kinsmen. He told Þorgils what he had to face, that the bóndis of the district seemed to him very unreliable, and the bishop completely hostile to him. Finnbjörn bóndi was then very ill from the wound he had received that summer at the battle of Þverá. He was well enough to be on his feet but very hoarse in his speech.

They rode into Eyjafjörð. The bishop was then staying at Möðruvellir and Þorgils and Þorvarð intended to meet him there. When the bishop knew this he rode away at once down to Munka-Þverá where he went into the church and had it locked. When Þorgils and Þorvarð learned this they rode to Þverá with thirty men. When the abbot met them he welcomed them warmly but told them that the bishop wanted them to ride away and refused to speak with them. The abbot offered Þorgils and his men whatever food they needed and a change of horses, whether the bishop liked this or not. Þorgils and Þorvarð asked the abbot if he would mediate between them and get an agreement to meet to discuss their quarrel. They promised quarter to the bishop and his men whatever the result of mediation, but asserted that they would not ride away before they achieved a meeting with the bishop: "And he may have leave to stay in the church as long as he wishes."

The abbot and Hall of Möðruvellir now opened negotiations but every offer of peace was refused; in the end the bishop, at

the abbot's entreaty, came out of the church. They went to the abbot's room; the abbot and Þórarin kaggi were present at their conference.

When Þorgils and Þorvarð went in with their men they greeted the bishop but he made no reply. They sat down and Þorvarð introduced his case as follows:

"Sir, our business here is that we all—I, my kinsman Þorgils, and Finnbjörn—wish to submit to your judgment everything we have done which has offended against Holy Church and diminished God's justice, so that we may earn absolution from you and a proper reconciliation. But we withhold from your arbitration those issues which are outstanding between us and other laymen; and in respect of all rights to residence in the district, we refuse to rely on your judgment because it seems to us that you have no right to decide on this issue. This is my will and that of Þorgils. But if you, sir, think you ought not to grant us absolution, nevertheless we know that you ought to grant us pardon for those offenses we committed here during the summer; we will accept that happily. That is all of my proposal at this time."

"That is my proposal too, sir," said Þorgils, "and in every respect I will bow to your decision, for the sake of friendship, and wherever I think that I myself am in no way dishonored. But I will not give up the district. It astonishes me very much that you have changed your mind so swiftly and so completely since we were very close friends. You must know that I am entirely innocent before you both in word and deed, and it seems to me they were harsh punishments with which you threatened the bóndis if they gave me or my men food or a change of fresh horses. But the time may come when you and your friends will find this regrettable, and more than likely other men than I and my company will feel it is quite unendurable."

The bishop was now very angry and directed many abusive words to Þorgils—words not proper to write down here. He said that Þorgils and his men had no right to take what the bóndis gave them:

"And you ought not to have any earth to walk on or heavens

to look upon, any right to anything whatsoever except the torments of Hell."

Þorgils was silent and made no reply. The bishop now presented the case against Finnbjörn, but Finnbjörn answered for himself:

"Sir," he said, "wise men will think that the words you have spoken today against my companion Þorgils are unreasonable. If a very foolish and a very ill-natured man had spoken this way he would have seemed to deserve something very near death.—But I am somewhat hoarse in answering you today. May God grant that at another meeting I may be far more eloquent.—Even so, it is clear in the sight of all men that those gold-necks who have swarmed over the countryside with robbery and chastisement you have nevertheless allowed to stand beside you at the altar in Holy Church, and shown favor to them for all to see, though it is perfectly true that they have burned many men in their homes and choked many poor, innocent folk in smoke. Some men may doubt that you yourself have been a party to certain of these evil deeds, but this all men know—burners are the worst of outcasts, both by God's law and man's."

The bishop sprang to his feet and exclaimed that the devil spoke through Finnbjörn's mouth.

"You talk," said the bishop, "about what they have taken on themselves to do as burners, but you are silent about what was done to them earlier in the way of manslaughter and other disgrace."

Many men tried to bring them to a reconciliation but nothing was achieved. As the bishop walked away Þorgils said, so that he could be heard, "I will not lay a hand upon you sir, nor will I plunder the see at Hólar; but you can count on this, that I will not pay much respect to your will in the district so long as you show contempt for my will."

The bishop and everyone else went away. Þorgils and his men went to their horses, but Þorvarð went over to the bishop and talked with him. Þorvarð said later that he had asked the bishop for absolution but the bishop directed him to a representative in the East Fjords, promising him and all his men absolution

if he rode out of the district and gave no support to Þorgils. Þorvarð and his companions now rode away and parted from each other over at Espihól. Þorgils rode to Skagafjörð and then home to Viðvík. Þorvarð and the bishop met again immediately and Finnbjörn reached a satisfactory agreement with them. Þorvarð then rode north to Fnjóskadal, but when they reached Draflastaðir Finnbjörn was so ill that he could not go on. He remained there but Þorvarð rode to the East Fjords. Óláf Kráksson the priest came to Finnbjörn and, as the bishop's representative, confessed him and gave him extreme unction; he died on Michaelmas Day of the wound which he had received at the Þverá battle; Þorgils and many others thought this a great loss when they learned of it.

In the autumn men came to Þorgils from the district. One of them was Böðvar Klængsson from Bjarnargil in Fljót, who became a remarkably capable man; later he earned much honor and great wealth and became a follower of Þorgils. A man named Guðmund Galtnesing came from Víðidal in the west; he was a young and powerful man. Many others came though they are not named here. Þorgils had posted men as spies as far west as Vatnsdal, because men thought they could expect Hrafn and Ásgrím to come from the west to attack. Þorgils was most often at home in Víðidal between the times when he was riding about the district on business. Between Þorgils and the bishop there was as much or even greater enmity than before they met one another in Eyjafjörð.

58

There was a man named Skeggi, an ordained deacon, who was a counselor at Hólar. He had a homestead at Kálfsstaðir, was very wealthy, and kept a very well-furnished household. But when the sheep-tax was called in, he refused to give any sheep or to pay Þorgils anything whatsoever. In the autumn therefore Þorgils sent his brother Ingimund up there, with Böðvar Klængsson of Fljót and Snorri gemsung. They were four or five men altogether, and they were to demand from Skeggi cattle for food or else ask him for some other contribution. Should

they not get this, then Þorgils, though he did not forbid them, did not order them to do anything violent. They now went up there, as has been reported. Skeggi would neither give nor sell anything, nor did he offer them any food. There were many people at the homestead, both men and women. They got into an argument, and Ingimund had some of his men run over and cut down several sheep carcasses hanging there. There was hand-to-hand fighting among the men, and the odds between them were noticeable for there were far more homemen. Snorri was thrown and held down for a time, as was Ingimund. Skeggi warned his men sternly not to do any harm to Ingimund. Böðvar thought he had not been treated with much consideration. When Ingimund got to his feet he struck one of Skeggi's housecarles with his buckler. The uproar went on for some time, and when they separated Ingimund and his companions had to go home without anything to show for their trip. Þorgils showed his displeasure with their expedition.

"You have," he said, "cut very sad and sorry figures."

Things were now quiet for a while.

59

One day at the beginning of winter when Þorgils was at home in Viðvík there was fine weather and a northerly wind. As it drew near sunset Þórð Hítnesing was standing out in the southern part of the pasture with some men. They saw two men riding so extremely fast that they raced into the home-field the moment they reached it. When Þórð came up with them he recognized Guðmund Galtnesing and with him another man from Víðidal. Þórð asked them for news and why they were in such haste. Guðmund said he had no news to relate, "But it is rumored that Hrafn and Ásgrím have come into the Dales from the West Fjords with three hundred and fifty men and intend first of all to ride to Hítardal against Sturla, then north against Þorgils, but they are to be expected only the moment they appear."

They all went up to the house now together. Þorgils asked

Þórð for the news Guðmund had reported. Þórð replied, "He said that Hrafn and Ásgrím have come from the West Fjords with a host of men. He seemed to think this is true. It is most likely, he said, that your kinsman Sturla may be either killed or captured. Your help would seem to him rather far away."

Þorgils said, "It may be that the situation is not as bad as you think; spies often talk very big."

Þorgils now took counsel with his followers as to what they should do and they decided to call up men. Þórð went out to Fljót; Ásbjörn, throughout Sæmundarhlíð; and Þorgils, throughout Blönduhlíð. All the men were to come to Krossanes on the following day. It is said that on the following evening four hundred men assembled at Krossanes.

In the evening when men were preparing to sleep Þorgils was told that some men had arrived outside who were not men of the district and were not known. He told Þórð to go out and ask their news. Þórð went out and recognized the men at once: the priest Guðmund Óláfsson and Eyjólf Þorgilsson with some other men who had come in a group. Þórð led them in and Þorgils gave them a warm and friendly welcome. Guðmund stated his business: he had been sent by Hrafn and Sturla—"To you, Þorgils. Hrafn has ridden south to Hítardal,"—and Sturla had come to meet him. They had been reconciled and were to name an equal number of men to arbitrate in their whole case. Each was to keep his districts and powers without going to Norway, and Þorgils was to choose whether he would accept this agreement or not. If he would be reconciled then Guðmund was to assure him of safe-conduct, and Hrafn wanted them to meet and themselves confirm the reconciliation by shaking hands.

"It seems to me likely," said Guðmund, "that if you refuse this reconciliation, Hrafn will ride to the north with the troops he holds ready and that this will mean harm for many men."

Guðmund now bent his whole mind to achieving a reconciliation between Hrafn and Þorgils. He agreed therefore to ride west, but stipulated that they give back the weapons and horses which had been taken on the island in Þverá. Þorgils at once

aecepted a safe-eonduct from Guðmund, and in return gave him assurances of safety whieh he was to deliver to Hrafn; their meeting was to be on All Saints' Day at Hólavað in Vatnsdal.

Þorgils then rode south with all his troops. Guðmund rode ahead in order to eheek Hrafn and his men. He met Hrafn in Miðfjörð and told him about his eonversation with Þorgils, and that a meeting was arranged for All Saints' Day at Vatnsdalsá. Hrafn was very reluetant to disperse his troops but Guðmund gained his point.

60

Hrafn now rode north with a group of followers and Ásgrím with his men. Þorgils eame south on All Saints' Day. He rode with his company aeross the ridge of land and from there one eould see everything that happened as far as Hólavað. The eompany was very reluetant to remain here, and many said that there was no need to deal sparingly with Hrafn if an opportunity offered itself. Þorgils would have none of this but bade them post men as lookouts and, if they saw anyone in danger on the road or in need of help, to make a bold deeision. Þorgils now rode out to the river with fourteen others. and on aeross the river.

Guðmund eame to meet him and said that Hrafn had spent the night at Breiðabólsstaðir and was intending to eome on here, but that the eompany of men on the ridge would seem to him rather large. They waited there for a time but Hrafn did not eome, and by then it seemed uneertain if he would eome. But when he was least expeeted Hrafn rode in upon them with fifteen men, all very well armed. Hrafn and his men dismounted as Þorgils and his men sprang up. Eaeh side moved forward, their spears leveled. The priest Guðmund and the men with him stepped between them; he began to reeount the agreement whieh they had made at Hítardal and what had passed between them. Men brought forward many reminders of what had happened between them, and the end of it was that they were reeonciled as Guðmund had suggested. It was by then well on

in the day and therefore time for men to find a place for the night. Þorgils rode to Breiðabólsstaðir in the evening and Hrafn rode to Hólar. In the morning Hrafn and his men came to Breiðabólsstaðir and there was much jesting and mirth between Hrafn and Þorgils. Then weapons were brought out and the horses were led forward. It was reported that Þorgils and his followers thought it most honorable to discharge their debts and bring everything that had been stolen up to the flagstaff.[43] They parted courteously and Þorgils rode north to Skagafjörð. Þorgils and Hrafn held a meeting in Hrútafjörð in the autumn, but no settlement was reached because neither Þorvarð nor Sturla came to it. They dispersed their troops then, and men promised faithfully to help Þorgils whenever he needed them; Þorgils now rode home to Viðvik. Many men thought they owed him profound thanks for his help, for he had restored the possessions which had been stolen from them at Geldingaholt.

61

Some time now passed and Þorgils remained quietly at home. Then he prepared to ride with some men up to Kálfsstaðir. Skeggi bóndi was at home there and as soon as he saw men riding in he mounted his horse and rode off; but he forbade men to use anything he owned. His men carried his goods into the church. There was scant time for this because Þorgils was approaching swiftly. Men and women both ran forward before the church door and said that Skeggi had forbidden the use of everything and denied anyone's right to anything whatsoever. Þorgils commented then that this seemed a good idea and that everything would surely then be in good order. First he bade his men break down the hedge of haystacks and lead the horses out; next he bade them prepare a meal, but neither the men nor the women complied. A great deal was then taken, much destroyed, and the entire household terrified.

When the bishop heard about this event he was greatly displeased. He decided to send a man for Broddi in Hof during the night, but Broddi showed no haste to come. The messenger

returned and told the bishop that it was more than likely Broddi would not come. The bishop sent a second man down to Kálfsstaðir to tell Þorgils that that very day the bishop would proclaim his excommunication with reversed candles, and more than likely would excommunicate the whole district.

Þorgils replied, "The bishop can do what he wishes about his services, but we think he will soon have more difficulties to complain about. I mean to seize his friends and kinsmen, harass some and rob or beat others, and they can count themselves lucky if they are not killed."

Murmurs of discontent were heard among the bishops' homemen and friends for they thought they could not endure to have things go on this way. Þórarin kaggi was now sent out to Hof with an urgent demand that Broddi come down. The bishop said he would pay serious attention to his suggestions if he would only come. Broddi replied that he would come, but remarked that this was just what could have been expected when the bishop persecuted great chieftains for such trivial actions as Þorgils, according to most people, had taken against the bishop. Broddi now came to the bishop, who told him his complaints about the injustices Þorgils had committed against him and his friends. Broddi argued that it seemed to him the bishop had acted far too rashly against Þorgils and said he thought Þorgils was not likely to be mollified by such actions. Broddi succeeded in arranging a meeting between them to talk over the case. Broddi, the priest Einar Brandsson, and Einar faxi undertook to negotiate. Þorgils was very reluctant, saying that so far as he was concerned their enmity could last as long as the bishop lived; however, in the end Þorgils yielded to Broddi's entreaties and rode with his men to Hólar.

They went into the main room and left their horses outside to be fed. The homemen came in then and said that the bishop forbade anything to be given to the horses. Þorgils said that the horses were to be fed just the same. The housecarles now took the fodder away from the horses but Þorgils' men gave it back to them. A man named Gísli and called Sauða-Gísli was a homeman at Hólar, a very swift-footed man. He went into the main

room with a second man, named Guðmund, nephew to the priest Þórð Ásbjarnarson.

Þorgils said, "Have you taken the fodder away from our horses?"

"We did so on the bishop's orders," they replied.

Þorgils said, "In return I shall do something else in the bishop's line—for you deserve a couple of blows with the back of an axe."

Men were easily found to do this; they jumped up at once and thrashed them. Gísli was somewhat injured but Guðmund only slightly. Men ran off at once and told the bishop what an outrage had been committed when men were beaten in the episcopal homestead. The bishop said Broddi was to go in, stop the fighting, and ask Þorgils to come up to the bishop's room to talk with him. Þorgils went up with some other men; no greetings were exchanged. Broddi began to recount how many faults they would both find in each other, if things continued to be so awkward in the district and they did not reach an agreement, and how many more men would then suffer harm. Þorgils offered the bishop sole arbitration in all those issues in which he had offended against the law of the church and against clerics—as far as this was legally determined—and for the rashness he had shown there at the see. But the bishop was to remove the ban of excommunication from him and absolve them all. For the raid on Kálfsstaðir Þorgils was willing to pay a fine in accordance with Broddi's estimate. They agreed on these terms and each was to be a friend to the other. The bishop was to call on the men of the district for friendship with Þorgils, and Þorgils in return was to help the bishop maintain his authority in the diocese whenever necessary. They shook hands on this then and were fully reconciled. The bishop led them into the church tower, released them from excommunication, and gave them absolution. After that they went up to the bishop's room and he had something to drink brought to them. He behaved as if he were very pleased but this seemed to men not entirely convincing. When Þorgils had been there for a time he then wanted to ride home and when he was ready to depart the bishop said to Þorgils: "I will now pronounce the verdict in our case."

Þorgils said, "This is rather hasty, sir. It was decided in our reconciliation that, within the agreement and after the investigation of sensible men, I should then make compensation for any offenses I have committed against Holy Church; however, I will agree to your idea if you wish to do it this way."

But he told the bishop to be careful in pronouncing his verdict if he wanted their reconciliation to be maintained. The bishop now reproached Þorgils for many reasons. Þorgils listened and thought they were not all true; when the bishop had listed everything he pardoned Þorgils on all these counts. Þorgils thanked the bishop courteously for the pardon and invited him to visit at any time convenient for him to come. The bishop accepted graciously and promised a visit. Þorgils now delivered his verdict about Skeggi; he said that Broddi and Einar were to go to Kálfsstaðir and assess the damage they had done there, but as for the scuffling between the homemen and Þorgils' men, they were to call it quits.

Broddi answered, "As for the damage which Skeggi has done, kinsman, you are to have no responsibility; I will pay compensation for that, but I would prefer you to bestow some honor on Skeggi."

Þorgils said that could not be done unless Skeggi showed that he deserved it. They now parted from each other on friendly terms and Þorgils rode home; the bishop had the church at Viðvík unlocked and services resumed. Two days later Skeggi bóndi arrived in Viðvík. He had brought a nine-year-old ox and a horse laden with three weights[44] of food; he gave these to Þorgils who accepted them gratefully. Thereafter there was a very strong friendship between them.

Þorgils now remained there at peace and became the most popular man in the district. Shortly afterwards his kinsman Þórð went west to Hítarnes to his homestead. Þorgils gave him fine gifts at parting, two hundreds in goods, a horse, and a byrnie.

62

Later in the spring Þorgils went to his place at Ás in Hegranes. He held a feast there to which he had invited Bishop Heinrek.

It was a splendid feast with generous gifts. He gave the bishop three stud-horses, three hundreds of goods, a gold ring, and a good book. Skeggi and many others gave him fine gifts too. The bishop parted from them in friendship and they maintained this afterwards.

Later in the summer the bishop made ready to go to Norway. Þorgils helped him with provisions of all sorts for the journey and accompanied him to the ship; there they spoke graciously to one another before parting. The bishop sailed for Norway, and in Norway he died.

Þorgils held another feast in the autumn and invited most of the more prominent bóndis. The company at the feast was large and they were treated with great liberality. Again there were fine gifts at parting and no one who had been invited went away without a gift. From these feasts Þorgils won great esteem from the bóndis. Many of them invited him to their homes, and during the winter he attended feasts throughout the district and accepted the best of gifts from the bóndis. There was much good will in the district now, so that it seemed to the bóndis heaven was almost at hand, since they had found such a chieftain. It seemed to them that Kolbein had come back, that the man they had always longed for had been born again.[45]

63

During the winter which Þorgils spent at Viðvík he rode west to his establishment at Stað and appointed stewards who were to manage the homestead in the future. Many men invited him to their homes in the west there and everyone showed him the greatest respect. His kinsman Sturla also invited him to his home in Hítardal where they held a splendid feast. Þorgils had many men with him, among them the bóndi Einar Halldórsson and Gunnlaug Hallfreðarson. Sturla gave his kinsman Þorgils fine gifts and they parted on the most affectionate terms. Þorgils now went north to his home there, having won for himself many friends and much honor.

Later in the spring Sturla changed his homestead to Svignaskarð and moved his household up on the hills there. He had what income he could get from the district. Many disagreements now began to develop between Sturla and Hrafn. They became such bitter enemies that Hrafn and Ásgrím rode to Staðarhól to attack Sturla and his men. He and his followers had ridden from home in the evening and stayed out on the hillside above Bjarnarstaðir because hostile actions by Hrafn had been reported. Early in the morning Sturla's followers wanted to ride home, but he thought it would be more advisable to wait until mid-morning, "If you are still determined to go home then, I will not hold you back, but if the dreams which I had last night were known, you would not be so eager to go."

About mid-morning they saw an extremely large number of men riding down from Þverfel past the islands. Each man rode more swiftly than the next and the sun shone on their weapons. It was Hrafn and Ásgrím. They did not pause until they reached Staðarhól; they had a kind of guerrilla force, as one could see.

Sturla and his men saw their approach and Sturla said, "Are you now as eager to ride home as you were this morning?"

No one said yes. Sturla had his horse brought up and then rode on up the mountainside. When Hrafn and Ásgrím went into Staðarhól, Ásgrím killed Helgi keis at the entrance. They stayed there only a short time once they knew that Sturla was not at home; then they rode back south across the heath. Sturla came home shortly afterwards.

Later in the summer men negotiated between them, trying to effect a reconciliation, and a meeting was held near Glerá. Sturla would not travel farther than this, for he did not trust them completely. Men mediated between them, seeking an agreement, but the outlook grew worse the more they talked. When all hope for agreement was exhausted Hrafn and his men had their horses brought up and intended to attack Sturla. Sturla and his men saw them riding in, seized their horses and rode away up to Krosshólar, and from there far up into the mountains. Hrafn and his men pursued them as hard as possible and drew

so near that they wounded one of Sturla's men who rode last of all; Ófeig ísung killed Einar Jónsson there. They had now gone about halfway. The weather had been clear, but suddenly so dense a fog rolled in that no one could see anyone else. They were now separated from Hrafn, who rode back with his men while Sturla slipped away. This was the end of the reconciliation among Hrafn, Ásgrím, and Sturla.

65

The summer that Þorgils lived at Ás, Ívar Arnljótsson came to Iceland. He reported that King Hákon had learned of the death of Eyjólf Þorsteinsson. Ívar traveled on the king's commission, bringing a letter from him to Þorgils. In this it was said that the king had assigned Eyjafjörð and all the country north from there up to the Quarter boundary to Þorgils as ruler, for Þórð Sighvatsson had now died.[46] All the bóndis submitted to Þorgils' authority then and accepted him as their leader. After Þórð's death Steinvör Sighvat's daughter claimed the district of Eyjafjörð, the estate at Grund, and other properties which Þórð had owned, for Þórð left no legitimate children and Steinvör was his legitimate sister.

That autumn Guðrún Gunnar's daughter returned home to Ás. Þorgils took her as his mistress and they had a daughter named Steinun. Her brother Illugi then became Þorgils' homeman.

66

That winter Þorgils traveled west to Snæfellsnes to his homestead at Stað; he had about thirty men all told. Things went well on their journey and they found the roads in good condition. But when they were riding down through Haukadal there was a thaw, and as they rode across Haukadalsá the river suddenly rose so high that those who were in the middle were swept off their horses. Svein Ívarsson, their guide, drowned there, and they were all in grave danger—Þorgils, Berg, Ásbjörn. That was on the Feast of St. Vincentíus. Men wondered greatly at this because all the watercourses were very low both before and afterwards.

Þorgils had Svein's body moved south to the church at Vatnshorn, and sent with the body the gift of a cow to the church. Þorgils then rode south to Stað to his homestead and stayed there for some time. Later he rode home to the north and there was no more news about this journey. He stayed there quietly and quite peacefully.

67

In the following summer Þorgils took over an establishment at Miklabær in Blönduhlíð because he thought that land more fertile for pasture and, in addition, the buildings were spacious. He kept a magnificent homestead here both as to numbers of men and provisions. In the spring Ásbjörn Illugason joined him there, and with him were also Berg Ámundason, Guttorm Guttormsson, Böðvar Klængsson, and many other followers. Þorgils' prestige was now at its height.

That winter Þorgils built another homestead at Auðbrekka in Hörgárdal. There too there were many men and a substantial herd of cattle. During that spring Steinvör had a large homestead built at Grund. That summer Þorgils made preparations to ride to the Þing with a full company of men. He sent word to all the more important men who lived in his lands to ride to the Þing; men were willing to do this and he had a very large and fine choice of men. He sent word to Einar Halldórsson that he should ride to the Þing with as many men as possible, and he came with one hundred and twenty men. Sturla and the men of Saurbær came with the men of Strandir and as many from Borgarfjörð as he could get. At the Þing, Þorvarð Þórarinsson came up to Þorgils and they had a friendly meeting. They had agreed they would ride into the Þing as one company. The Þing itself was peaceful, and Þorgils had the biggest say there.

With Þorgils was his cousin Jón járnbúk. Þorvarð thought he had grounds for complaint against Jón, and charged him with being involved in the death of his brother Odd. A case was now prepared against Jón. Þorgils and Sturla worked for a reconciliation and wanted to free him from punishment, but they found this very difficult because Þorvarð had conceived a great hostility to Jón. When it came to the time when the courts had to close,

Þorvarð and Þorgils discussed the case together, and Þorvarð was more unyielding the more men pressed him.

Þorgils then said: "I will say this to you, Þorvarð: if you sentence Jón to full outlawry,[47] you will have to look for him in my house and I will not throw him out."

Sturla added, "People will say, Þorvarð, that Þorgils has done so much for you that he has a right to make a one-man settlement."

Many others agreed that he should not let himself be drawn into such a quarrel. So it turned out that Jón was not prosecuted. Þorvarð said as he went away that in this instance men could see that Þorgils wanted all the power and wanted it to himself alone. But people thought they saw that each of them had brought great ill-will to this case.

Þorgils and Þorleif Þórðarson had come to a reconciliation, after their enmity, about the differences there had been between them, and by their agreement Þorleif was to arrange for the payments of movable goods. Þorleif had these gifts brought forward at the end of the Þing; he gave Þorgils a stud-horse and two byrnies, two shields and three hundreds in goods, a large gold ring and two sálds of food. They parted on friendly terms and men thought that most things had turned to honor for Þorgils. Þorgils and Þorvarð parted from each other civilly. Þorgils now rode north to Skagafjörð while Sturla rode home to Saurbær. Berg rode west with Einar and his men, and as they were crossing Bláskógaheið Berg told Einar and Ámund a dream which Bergþór in Heraðsdal had had.

It seemed to Bergþór that he had gone outside during the night. He thought he saw a big chair standing beside the river at Víðimýr. A man went up to the chair and took away one leg; the chair then leaned to one side so that it almost fell over. He thought that a woman then came up to him and said, "What is that chair and who owns it?"

And the man replied:

4. With blaze of swords
We will burn this bench,

In balefire sear it.
—I know this chair.

Then she went on:

5. A host of men
Whetted for battle
Will fairly greet Þorgils
With scorn in their swords.

And it seemed to Bergþór then that the chair was bloody. Then he woke up.

Þorvarð rode east from the Þing across the river, where he and Steinvör met. She made over to Þorvarð the estate at Grund and all those rights in Eyjafjörð she thought she owned title to after her brother Þórð. Men said that she goaded Þorvarð to act like a man in holding on to these possessions.

68

It is now time to take up where we left off earlier, when that same enmity developed between Hrafn and Sturla. In the summer it happened that Sturla rode to Tunga to see Hrafn's brother Óláf. Hrafn learned of this, and at once he and Ásgrím rode from the West Fjords south to Svignaskarð to attack Sturla. He was not at home then but had ridden down to Mýrar. Hrafn and his men surrounded the household in their home at Svignaskarð, but when they knew that Sturla was not there they did not kill anyone; however, they were destructive and did a good deal of damage. Sturla got news of this and rode back at once over the lower part of Mýrar until he reached Krossholt. From there he had Þorkel brennir go with him and rode out to Borgarhraun. He sent men to Böðvar and Einar asking them to announce a general call-up on the ness for men to join him against Ásgrím and Hrafn. Böðvar wanted to join him but Einar would not move against Hrafn unless Þorgils ordered him to, "On the other hand, I will defend Sturla when he comes here if Hrafn and his men mean to attack him."

Sturla came, and they decided that Þorkel brennir should ride

north to Þorgils as fast as possible. Sturla wanted Þorgils to come to meet him so that one way or another they could settle this quarrel between Hrafn and themselves. Einar came in to meet Sturla and Sturla asked him for help, but Einar repeated what he had said earlier. Sturla now rode out to Stað; when he met his brother Böðvar he received a warm welcome, but Böðvar could not offer anything in the way of help. No one wanted to join Sturla's forces. He rode from there to Helgafel and from there in to Eyr where he stayed on the night before the Latter Feast of the Virgin Mary.

69

Now it is time to tell about Þorkel's journey. When he reached Miklabær Þorgils had ridden north to Öxarfjörð. Þorkel at once rode north after him and met him in Reykjadal on his way south. He gave Þorgils his message and Þorgils set out immediately—he rode south as fast as he could and summoned men from everywhere throughout the district, whoever he could find. They all rode south as swiftly as possible; it was almost unbelievable how fast they traveled over such a long distance. They went on until they reached Haukadalsskarð. Hrafn had spies out in the scarth and Þorgils had sent spies south across it. Hrafn's spies, where they held watch in the scarth, saw Þorgils' men riding and sped away to Hrafn, reaching Sauðafel during the services for the Feast of the Virgin Mary.

Hrafn had a homestead in Hundadal. He had meat brought out there and meant to hold a feast but there was no time for this. He posted another spy on the hill near Þykkvaskóg. Hrafn had immediately thought that the detachment they had seen must be part of Þorgils' following. Then they saw the vanguard of the company riding up over Garganseyr. Hrafn and his men ran up on the mountain, each taking whatever food he could get, and shortly after this Þorgils and his men rode into Hundadal. Their horses were utterly worn out, so that they could not ride after Hrafn but lost sight of him. Þorgils wanted no looting, saying that they owed this to his kinswoman Þuríð;[48] nor would

he let any damage be done. He said there was no glory in it when no one was at home but women. Þorgils and his men now went down to the fortifications.[49] From the homestead they took cattle and sheep for their men, and spent the night in the fortifications.

70

Sturla spent the night at Eyr, as was written earlier. When he was dressed in the morning he said he had dreamed that he would soon hear something of his kinsman Þorgils. Mass was celebrated early and after that he rode to the Dales. Most men thought his journey imprudent; he intended to ride during the night north to Haukadalsskarð and meet Þorgils. As they were riding in along the coast Sturla again said that they would meet Þorgils soon. Some of his men threatened to leave him and ride west to Saurbær, but Sturla ordered them not to ride away, so they did not. As they were riding near Hólmslát they saw a man coming toward them. Sturla said he would go to meet the man, "For he will be able to give me some news."

It was the priest Erling Þorkelsson who had ridden into Snóksdal and had heard about the message which had reached Sauðafel at the time of services. Sturla now felt certain that Þorgils had either arrived or would arrive at once. Sturla and his men role to Vestliðaeyr. Þorkel brennir also came there and gave the news of Þorgils' journey, that he had chased Hrafn up on the mountain, that Þorgils had then gone out to the fortifications, and that he had not fewer than four hundred men. Sturla rode to Hamraendar where he ate his evening meal and afterwards he rode out to the fortifications. There was a very happy meeting between the kinsmen and they exchanged news of what had happened on both of their expeditions.

Hrafn sent word to Þorgils to try to effect a reconciliation: "I have got away now, and it is not certain he can catch me this time."

"There's no use in trying to effect a reconciliation in the evening," said Þorgils, and no safe-conduct was granted.

The next morning the priest Ketil Þorláksson, Guðmund Óláfs-

son, the priest Pál from Langadal, the priest Snorri from under Fell, and Þórarin Sveinsson all arrived. Safe-conducts were granted and they called a meeting; Hrafn and his men rode down from the fells to the meeting, twelve all told. A reconciliation was discussed but it looked unpromising. Sturla was very reluctant to come to terms because he thought he had been exposed to many attacks: "But Þorgils is to make the decision."

Þorgils was eager for a settlement but awkward about the terms. So it came about that Hrafn and Ásgrím offered Þorgils the right to judge in all their differences, but they wanted to hold to the agreement they had made with him in Vatnsdal. This was refused and when they could not get these terms they submitted their whole case to Þorgils. Þorgils refused it.

"You," he said, "will then call it a forced agreement. My idea is that we reach a full reconciliation or none at all. You can ride away from here under safe-conduct even though we are not reconciled. I ask you that we each have an equal number of men, those who are thought to have most good will. No one can say then that you were forced into the agreement because our troops are at the moment bigger."

Their agreement was that the priest Snorri from Skarð and the priest Snorri from under Fell, the priest Pál from Langadal and, on Hrafn's side, the priest Þorkel, Guðmund Óláfsson, and Þórarin Sveinsson should arbitrate. A meeting was now arranged for the following day in Bjarnardal and they met there at the time stated. Einar and the men of Strandir went over to Þorgils and talked for a long time; the arbitrators were agreed about a reconciliation if it met with Þorgils' approval, but they did not announce it until they had his consent. It was obvious that Þorgils was not stingy even if he had to contribute from his own purse. The verdict was now announced: in issues of equal weight one thing was balanced off against another, but compensation was demanded where this was thought necessary. Many men were outlawed from the district, but none from the country, and each was to retain his goðorð. They upheld this agreement as long as they were all alive.

Þorgils now rode down through Norðrárdal; Hrafn rode with

him part of the way and was very gracious. They talked together a great deal and parted on friendly terms. Ásgrím and some of his company rode down through the dale. They all thought they had to say something to Þorgils; one man would ride up to him as another rode away, each trying to supplant the other. But Ásgrím was much keener than the others and held on to Þorgils' stirrup so that he was not pushed away. They talked at length and parted on friendly terms. No one saw any signs that Ásgrím or anyone else was remembering that any differences or quarrels had existed between them. They all kissed Þorgils and offered him their friendship. He was completely gracious in all this and bade them all farewell.

71

Þorgils and Sturla rode to Dalsmynni in the evening and in the morning the two kinsmen parted. Þorgils rode out to Hvanneyr where Bishop Sigvarð was staying. He received Þorgils graciously and recounted to him a good deal about his disputes with Þórð Andréasson and what difficulties he had got into. He asked Þorgils for help in this affair if he found he needed it, and Þorgils promised to do the best he could if he had the chance. They parted on the friendliest of terms. The bishop invited Þorgils to Skálaholt in the autumn if he would like to come. In the evening Þorgils rode out to Kalastað, where he asked on behalf of Ásbjörn Illugason for the hand of Eirný, the priest Halldór's daughter; she replied indifferently, but the priest Halldór and his son Þorstein received the offer with favor. Þorgils stayed in Saurbær another night but there was no betrothal. When Þorgils rode away Þorstein rode along with him and invited him to visit Hest. There Einar and Þorgils parted, and Einar gave him a good stud-horse and a six-year-old ox, and he said that their kinship should never falter as long as they lived. As Þorgils was riding up through the district the bóndis rode out to him; each one offered him anything they had that he wanted and some brought gifts to him. Thus he rode north to his home, and considered this a brisk expedition.

72

Some time later Þorgils rode south to Borgarfjörð over Arnarvatnsheið. Egil rode from Reykjaholt out to Saurbær to the priest Halldór. They decided that Ásbjörn was to marry Eirný. Þorgils celebrated the wedding at Reykjaholt and gave a splendid feast. Egil told Þorgils that five of Hrafn's men were there—his brother Óláf and his companions: "And you must arrange a place for Óláf where you wish."

Þorgils answered, "He is to be made welcome and to sit beside me, for Hrafn and I are now completely reconciled."

A notable moment at this celebration occurred when bread was cast on the table in front of Þorgils. Óláf saw drops of fresh blood on each slice. Men thought this remarkable, and tried to find out if anyone there was wounded so that he was bleeding, or where the blood came from, but they found no traces of anything. Þorgils rode next to Skálaholt where he accepted gifts from the bishop; and from there he rode north to his home.

Ásbjörn was now married and he and his wife spent the winter at Miklabær with Þorgils.

73

In the autumn Þorvarð came from the East Fjords and settled down in the homestead at Grund which Steinvör had given him. When Sturla's message reached him Þorgils rode north to Eyjafjörð where he had many unfinished cases. He and Þorvarð met and Þorvarð laid claim to the district of Eyjafjörð which Steinvör had made over to him. Þorgils refused to give up the district, saying, "I have the king's commission and the consent of the bóndis who live in this district."

The bóndis themselves wished to serve Þorgils, not Þorvarð. They met together several times in the autumn, and relations between them were rather cool though they watched their words, and at every meeting Þorgils had a larger group of supporters than Þorvarð. On one occasion at a meeting people noticed that Þorvarð was very disgruntled. It seemed to him there was no hope of his getting any part of the district. Throughout the meeting he had been sitting on the outer part of the long-bench

near the corner-posts. He now stood up, his men with him, and went out, saying: "We can hope for nothing except to be shoved into a corner."

Þorvarð and his men went to their horses and rode away, but when they had gone a short distance they dismounted and rested. Shortly afterwards Þorgils and his men rode away, and Þorgils sent off in various directions on business to different homesteads; not many were left behind. They saw that Þorvarð and his men were mounting their horses, turning them and clattering around as if they were undecided in which direction to go; but then they rode off swiftly. Þorgils and his men had been standing on the paving with their weapons until Þorvarð rode away. Þorgils' men voiced a strong suspicion that Þorvarð intended to make an attack on Þorgils if he thought there was an opportunity, but Þorgils told them to be quiet, "For I will not listen to such ideas."

Þorgils now rode home to Skagafjörð when he had finished his business. He stayed at home there until after Christmas, held splendid feasts, and had a great Yule-drinking. He invited many prominent bóndis and gave them magnificent gifts. He kept a magnificent household there both in numbers of men and in equipment. Many visions were seen both at Miklabær and other places in the district, but Þorgils made light of them all and gave them no credence; therefore we will not write about them.

74

After Christmas Þorgils made ready to ride north, first to Svarfaðardal and thence north to Eyjafjörð. Many of his followers tried to dissuade him from this journey, because many of them feared that Þorvarð was not to be trusted.

But Þorgils would not listen to them: "I do not expect anything of Þorvarð," he said, "that I do not expect of myself."

Þorgils knew that a meeting was arranged between Þorvarð and Hrafn west in Vatnsdal; he told his stewards in his homestead that they were to show Þorvarð the best possible hospitality if he were to appear, have fresh horses ready for him and all the provisions that he might need. Þorgils then rode away from home. Altogether the company was nearly thirty, a hand-

picked troop. Nothing was known of Þorgils' journey until he rode into Eyjafjörð, where Þorvarð and he met and talked at length about the district and about their disputes; they never agreed about anything, but neither did they come to a complete rupture during their talk. Þorvarð thought he had a right to Eyjafjörð: he thought honor was being withheld from him and from his men if he did not get possession of it. Þorgils offered him all the district north from Varðgjá,[50] but Þorvarð refused this for he thought he had not been offered anything if it were not all of Eyjafjörð.

There was a man named Péter who lived at Öngulsstaðir. Þorvarð had had his hand cut off. He was a friend of Þorgils and reproached Þorvarð for his refusal; he thought there was little or no reason for it. He observed also that some people said that Péter, in contrast to Þorvarð, had not benefited much from his friendship with Þorgils. This matter was not straightened out and their talk led to disagreement; they parted from one another rather coldly.

Among the bóndis in Eyjafjörð, Þorvarð of Saurbær was a very good friend of his namesake, and Þorvarð Þórarinsson often talked with him; he was considered somewhat insincere and ill-natured. When Þorvarð and Þorgils parted, Þorvarð rode out along Eyjafjörð, and the rumor was that he would go to meet Hrafn. When Þorvarð had gone some distance Magnús Jónsson rode back to Þorgils, talked with him for some time and asked him how soon he would be riding west. But Þorgils did not answer outright. He asked whether he would go that evening, and Þorgils said he would ride as far as Hrafnagil. Þorgils told Magnús and the others to ride peaceably in the western districts, "And when you reach Miklabær," he said, "take fresh horses and whatever provisions you need."

He said that he himself would not make any difficulties where his kinsman Þorvarð was concerned. With this they parted and each bade the other farewell. Berg Ámundason now talked to Þorgils, saying that he ought to ride to Munka-Þverá, "For I don't like the looks of Þorvarð," he said, "and he is not to be trusted."

Þorgils smiled at this and said, "That is certainly not true, and I shall ride to my cousin's[51] as I planned."

Berg said Þorgils would decide but, "I would rather go to Munka-Þverá."

75

Þorgils rode to Hrafnagil; he was warmly received there and arranged for places for his men at neighboring homesteads. He was asked his choice of entertainment for the evening, sagas or dances. He asked what sagas there were to choose among and was told there was the saga of Archbishop Thomas, and he chose this for he loved him above all other saints. The saga was then read aloud right up to the part when the Archbishop was assaulted in the church and the crown of his head struck off. Men said that Þorgils paused at this, and then remarked, "That would be a fine death."

Shortly afterwards he fell asleep.

They left off the saga then and prepared to eat. When everyone had had his fill Berg and Guðmund bóndi discussed whether they should post a mounted guard, but Þorgils said there was no need of this, stating that he had no suspicions about his kinsman Þorvarð. This was not done, so nothing came of the idea.

Þorvarð had sent over a man named Halldór, known as skraf. He was to make sure that the doors were open in case Þorvarð came there during the night. He was also to tell them which bed Þorgils had. And if there was any change in Þorgils' plans about riding where he had intended, Halldór was to let Þorvarð know, and also whether or not they were keeping a watch. When Þorgils came to bed Halldór lay on the outside edge of the bed next to him and talked with him for a long time, until Þorgils had finally fallen asleep. Then Halldór went out and unlocked the door.

When Þorvarð and Þorgils had parted, Þorvarð and his men had ridden out along the fjord. When they came to a hollow in the valley out in Skjaldarvík they dismounted and Þorvarð began to speak:

"Now the old saying comes true, that any vessel can be filled

so full that it overflows—which is to say that I will no longer endure to have Þorgils withhold my honors from me so that I cannot seek any redress. I wish to let you know that I intend to make an attack on Þorgils tonight and kill him if I can. I want everyone to bear in mind that if the opportunity offers itself he is at once to use his weapon against Þorgils, and to strike decisively, so that he will not be able to speak of this event, for everything is as good as won once he is dead. You will also remember that Þorgils is not a man to let offenders off with impunity. And if there is any man here who does not want to follow me let him speak up now."

Jörund gest then spoke: "I will say this for myself—because of my lord King Hákon and my companionship with Þorgils I will ride away, and I call your plan a very great crime and a wicked action."

Þorvarð said, "It is not manliness which is urging you to ride off."

Þorvarð and his men now jumped on their horses and everyone joined him except Jörund gest, who stayed behind irresolute.

76

Þorvarð and his companions now rode until they reached Hrafnagil. They traveled fairly quietly and came up to the open doors and entered at once with drawn swords. They met Halldór and he told them where Þorgils lay. Magnús went over to the bed and Þorgils was sleeping with his face turned upward, alone in the bed. Men say that Magnús struck him with an axe across the lower part of his rib cage but they disagree as to whether that was a fatal blow or not. Þorgils woke up with this, sprang up, pulled down his sword which hung near his bed, and straightway struck Magnús. He struck apart the rim of his steel hat so that it flew off at once, and then Þorgils struck one blow after another. Magnús gave way and fell to his knees. At this moment the upper hilt-guard of Þorgils' sword fell off and the blade slid out of the middle-fastening, so that Þorgils was now weaponless. He ran against Magnús and threw him to the ground be-

neath him. Þorvarð and his men ran forward at this moment and attacked, and everyone who could struck at Þorgils. Þorgils asked Þorvarð if he were to be given quarter but Þorvarð said, "You have what quarter you can see now."

Þorvarð then bade his men drag Þorgils out. Þorvarð seized him under his trouser belt and they dragged him out through the hall. When they came up where the priest Þórð was sleeping Þorgils said, "Þórð priest, I would greatly like to be shriven by you," and he reached out his hands to him.

The priest Þórð sprang up and wanted to stretch his hands out to Þorgils, ordering those devils to let him confess Þorgils; but they shoved him away so that he staggered aside, and Þorgils had no priest.

Þorgils now asked where his men were and Þorvarð replied, "These are now your men."

When they reached the outer part of the hall Þorvarð stabbed him with his sword. When they came out through the door Þorvarð told a man named Jón, known as usti, to strike him. When he was on the threshold Jón struck him in the head, on the skull along the hairline. Þorgils was then dragged outside.

Þorvarð and his men then went back into the hall. They seized Berg and Ásbjörn and led them out; they asked for quarter but got none. Both were killed. Halldór skraf killed Berg and . . .[52] killed Ásbjörn. But other men among those who had been with Þorgils received quarter. After this there was much pillaging and looting, and the next day Þorvarð and his men rode up to Grund: the Feast of St. Vincentíus was on a Tuesday then and it was the beginning of the day when Þorvarð and his men arrived.

The following morning those of Þorgils' men who had spent the night in other homesteads came in. Guðmund bóndi and Guttorm Guttormsson attended to the body of Þorgils. A message was sent to Munka-Þverá and the news was reported to the abbot. Everyone thought this an important and sorrowful event. The abbot, accompanied by monks and priests, went at once to meet the body. When the abbot arrived he and many others were shown the body of Þorgils, which was now wrapped.

Those who were present have said that Þorgils had twenty-two wounds but that only seven of them bled; one of these was the wound in the head by which his skull was struck off. It was thus granted Þorgils to receive the same wound as, it was told in the saga that evening, Archbishop Thomas received in the church at Canterbury, and which had seemed to Þorgils that evening to be the fairest way to die. The abbot had his body wrapped and said, as many people have heard, that no man's body was more handsome than Þorgils, where one could see it for wounds. The abbot had the body carried up to Munka-Þverá and given fitting burial there. Many men stood at the grave in great deep sorrow.

Þorvarð was bitterly hated for this deed throughout all the districts which Þorgils had governed, and the act was strongly condemned. Most people who were well informed said that men did not know that any man had ever offered a worse or a more savage reward than Þorvarð for help such as that Þorgils had given him. There is no more to tell about Þorgils.

His followers rode west to Skagafjörð and this event was reported throughout the country. Men showed they were grieved at this news whether they had been Þorgils' men or not. The slaying of Þorgils took place when it was one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight years since the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the eleventh Kalend of February,[53] on the Feast of St. Vincentíus the deacon.

Þorvarð now sought to gain the district again, but he failed. The bóndis were even less willing now to serve him as their ruler, for he seemed to everyone an even worse man than before on account of this deed. He remained at Grund for the rest of the winter.

77

The winter in which Þorgils was slain Böðvar and his son Sighvat were living at their place at Stað on Snæfellsnes. Böðvar was old then but Sighvat was a young man. Guðmund, Þorgils' brother, had spent the winter at Miklabær with him. When this

event was known in the western districts men thought the death of Þorgils a great loss.

Shortly after the slaying Guðmund rode south and met Hrafn who invited him to his home, promised him his friendship, and showed his displeasure at the slaying of Þorgils. Sighvat, Hrafn, and Sturla met one another in Borgarfjörð at Þingnes during Lent. Sturla was deeply grieved at the death of Þorgils, but the event did not seem to him entirely unexpected, for he thought Þorgils had been warned above all about placing complete trust in Þorvarð. Sighvat asked Hrafn for help, but he refused on any terms and would not bind himself to anything at all; no understanding was reached among them.

In the spring, at Easter, Sighvat and Sturla called up troops and went with their men north to Skagafjörð. They had such bad weather that men said they had never known a spring so severe. There was much sickness in Miðfjörð also. Þorgils' followers and some bóndis in Skagafjörð joined them. They learned that Þorvarð was at Grund and they rode north over Hraunárheið and down into Vaskárdal. They reached Grund about supper time. A spy had come to Þorvarð about six in the evening from Jón in Glæsibær and Þorvarð had ridden out to Kaupang at once, intending to go north in the district immediately, for almost no one in the district had come to join him.

The door was broken open but Þorvarð was not to be found. They had traveled somewhat recklessly and had exhausted their horses. Sighvat wanted to pursue Þorvarð immediately, for men thought he would not ride farther than Kaupang. During the night Sighvat rode down along the fjord with nearly forty men. When they reached Kaupang they were told that Þorvarð had ridden out to Svalbarð, if he had not ridden up onto the heath. They saw Þorvarð's men riding, and Sighvat and his men gave chase, but as they were not more than ten altogether they had to turn back. Þorvarð rode north but Sighvat rode back to Grund and stayed there for several days.

The priest Óláf Kráksson then arrived from the north. He had been sent by Þorvarð to try to effect a reconciliation. Þorvarð said he was now most anxious for a reconciliation, and a meeting

was arranged at the fjord at Gásacyr and safe-conduct granted. Abbot Eyjólf and most of the most prominent bóndis of the district came, and Þorvarð arrived with a great many men. With him were men of Reykjadal and of Fnjóskadal. It was agreed that for a reconciliation the case should come before a court of an equal number of men from each side, and Abbot Brand was to arbitrate; and Þorvarð was not to remain in the district. Sturla and Sighvat then rode home to the west.

Þorvarð rode to Grund and stayed there a short time, then rode to the East Fjords. He was never again chieftain in Eyjafjörð. Loft Hálfdanarson took over the estate at Grund. The case now remained quiet, the meeting hung fire, and nothing came of it during the summer.[54]

78

Sturla and Sighvat rode to the Þing.[55] Sturla and Sighvat became the jarl's men, and he promised them help in taking vengeance for Þorgils. At the Þing a case of raid was proclaimed against Þorvarð, and Sighvat prosecuted the case against Þorvarð. He was sentenced to full outlawry along with many of the men who had been at Hrafnagil.

79

Sighvat now built a homestead at Stað on Snæfellsnes. He was a very important man. Between Gizur and Sighvat there was never complete trust: what divided them was that Gizur thought Sighvat ought to take vengeance on Þorvarð, while Sighvat thought Gizur would never help him. Sighvat stayed at home in Stað and there were many disagreements between him and Hrafn.

A man named Svein now came to Kolbeinsstaðir and said he had been sent by Gizur with a letter, and that Gizur had sent word to his cousin Narfi the priest to deliver the letter to Sighvat, "Because I was not sent any farther," he said.

Ingigerð Ásbjörn's daughter whom Ketil Ketilsson had got with child accompanied him to Kolbeinsstaðir. Narfi and Ketil's sister Valgerð took her in and the priest Narfi sent the letter to Stað.

The letter said that Sighvat was to come with fourteen other men to Reykjaholt to meet Gizur. But Sighvat did not leave home and Gizur never came either. Hrafn, however, came with thirty men and it was really he who had sent the letter by Saura-Svein. When Sighvat discovered this he threatened to rob the priest Narfi, but nothing came of this.

80

Vigfús Gunnsteinsson lived at Sauðafel; he and Sighvat had settled their quarrel and promised one another a kinsman's friendship. Between Þorvarð and Vigfús there had been friendly dealings; they met at Keldur and Vigfús stayed with Þorvarð for a long time in the winter. When Vigfús came home he met his cousin Sturla and asked Sturla to arrange a reconciliation between Þorvarð and Sighvat. Vigfús presented Þorvarð's message and his offer of a settlement, setting this forth with great eloquence. Sturla was in favor of a reconciliation and said the prospect of avenging Þorgils seemed slight as things now stood. Sturla pointed out that Sighvat had asked Gizur and Hrafn for support but neither would help him with an attack. A meeting was arranged for the Monday in the last week of Lent, at Iða, if nothing unavoidable prevented this. Vigfús now sent word to Þorvarð to tell him how matters stood.

When Sighvat left home he traveled so secretly that neither Gizur nor Hrafn knew of this. He rode to Reykjaholt where Hallvarð gullskó was then staying. He had come to Iceland in the summer, bringing King Hákon's announcement, and was greatly respected. A tax was now exacted from the country, as many know, so we will not write more about this, albeit there is much material for a saga. Hallvarð and Egil decided to join Sighvat on his expedition; when they came south of Hallbjarnarvörður, Sturla and Vigfús came to meet them. Vigfús, Egil, and Hallvarð rode to Þingvellir but Sturla and Sighvat rode south to Laugardalsskarð. The weather then began to thicken, there was sleet, then a snow storm, and the condition of the roads became very bad. Both men and horses foundered because of

the bad weather. They spent the night out in the scarth, and toward daybreak the weather cleared up. They then traveled south from the heath; on Sunday they were in Laugardal and on Monday they rode to Skálaholt. The homemen said that the bishop had forbidden anyone to give them fodder and that he would not offer them any hospitality because it seemed to him they were bringing armed men into the episcopal see.

Sighvat went to the bishop then and greeted him, but the bishop scarcely replied.

Sighvat said: "Sir, let our horses be given hay and our men be given some food."

Shortly afterwards Þorstein Skeggjason and Jón of Ás arrived at Skálaholt and reported that Þorvarð had come to Iða. They came with a safe-conduct from him and received another in return from Sighvat. A meeting was announced for Laugarás; the bishop was asked to go to the meeting but he refused and demanded from Sighvat the fine which he thought Þorgils owed him, claiming that he had paid forty hundreds for him for the slaying of Valgarð.

"I would gladly," the bishop said, "have paid that fine and as much again for Þorgils still to be alive and well, but now I mean to have each of my hundreds."

Sighvat said, "I will pay this fine so that Þorgils' soul may not suffer on account of the unpaid sum."

Sighvat and his men went to the meeting then. Much was discussed in secret but some things were brought before the public. They reached an agreement, and once it had been confirmed by shaking hands they were at once to announce it. Sturla and Hallvarð, who had been Þorgils' companions and friends, along with Egil Sölmundarson, were to give judgment on Sighvat's behalf, and on Þorvarð's behalf Vigfús Gunnsteinsson, Þorstein Skeggjason, and Jón of Ás were to give judgment.

Sturla pronounced the sentence: for the slaying of Þorgils one hundred and fifty hundreds[56] were stipulated, but from this was deducted thirty hundreds for the attack on Þorvarð together with the robbery and damage done at Grund. It was stipulated that each chieftain was to pay the sums demanded of his men. In

the agreement between Hrafn and Þorgils of Bjarnardal it was allotted to Þorgils to compensate Finnbjörn's heirs with twenty hundreds, but Þorvarð was to pay this—in this way the bishop would have Þorgils' outstanding debt to him paid by Þorvarð. Þorvarð was to pay Sighvat sixty hundreds; one third of this was to be in gold and pure silver, another third in suitably costly things and valuable lands, and the final third in costly goods which were worth not less than ten aurar.[57] Þorvarð was to have the movable goods which fell to Sighvat's lot taken west to Stað, where Sighvat was to have them evaluated. All of those who were convicted of having done injury to or made an armed attack on Þorgils were to go out to Norway and remain there for three years, or pay ten hundreds each. Jón usti, who was charged with the slaying of Þorgils, was to go to Norway and never return; furthermore none of those who were convicted of doing any injury to Þorgils was to be given shelter in the West Fjords Quarter as long as Sighvat and Guðmund were alive. Þorvarð was not exiled from the country, but he announced that he meant to go to Norway before three years passed. For the slaying of Berg sixty hundreds were stipulated, and equally sixty hundreds for the slaying of Ásbjörn, if the chief prosecutors would be content with this. Þorvarð paid willingly and generously all the fines which were imposed for the slaying of Þorgils. He thanked the men who had taken part in the judgment and felt relieved, he said, because he had now reached a reconciliation with the brothers, "And," he added, "I shall always make good any wrongs committed against Þorgils' kinsmen or relations."

He gave Sighvat a fine silver vessel, a scarlet kirtle and a gold ring, and gave Guðmund a silver belt. Þorvarð now went east across the river, while Sighvat spent the night at Skálaholt. In the morning men rode away, but Sighvat remained behind for he had not completed his business with the bishop. He told the bishop how things were arranged concerning his payment to him, and the bishop said that he was perfectly content with this.

Sighvat then said to the bishop: "I need horses,"—and he asked the bishop to lend or sell him some so that he could depart.

The bishop flatly refused, for it seemed to him that Sighvat had not spoken to him as courteously as he liked. Sighvat then brought a horse from the priest Ketil. Sighvat and his men stayed there that day and ate their supper there; the bishop had drink served to them. In the evening Sighvat rode out onto the heath; he and the bishop had little to say at parting. He reached home in Stað on Good Friday.

81

The following summer Sighvat and Sturla [58] went to Norway with Hallvarð gullskó. Sighvat went to see King Hákon and became his man; he won great respect from the king and became a mighty and powerful man. He traveled out of the country west to Scotland[59] with King Hákon, and there won high praise because of his valor and presence of mind. Before they parted King Hákon promised him many honors if they both lived. But on this expedition the illness seized King Hákon which took him from this world. This seemed to Sighvat and to many other men an irreparable loss.

Sighvat traveled back east to Norway with the body of King Hákon and sought out his son King Magnús. Sighvat then received such great honors as no other man from Iceland ever received. He was deeply grieved at the loss of King Hákon, for he thought his like would never be seen again in Norway. King Magnús would not allow Sighvat to return to Iceland, and he could not be happy in Norway, so he left the country, intending to go to Jerusalem. When he reached the Red Sea he fell ill and died seven days before Michaelmas; his death was considered a great loss.

Guðmund Böðvarsson lived at Stað in a fine homestead. He married Þrúð Björn's daughter. Guðmund went to Norway after he had been living at Stað a very long time. His wife Þrúð had then died. Guðmund became a retainer of King Magnús; but when he had been in Norway one year he fell ill and died in Bergen seven days before the Feast of St. Columba.

About Sturla Þórðarson

About Sturla Þórðarson

1

It is now time to take up where we left off earlier,[1] with Sturla's return home to the west. He established his household in Staðarhól while Hrafn, with Sturla's help, established his at Stafaholt.

That summer when tribute to King Hákon was sworn in Iceland, Abbot Brand went abroad and Óláf, the Bishop of Greenland, came to Iceland. In the following year Brand was consecrated Bishop of Hólar and returned to Iceland. There were at that time three bishops in Iceland. King Hákon went to Scotland at that time. Þorleif hreim was the Lawspeaker.[2]

Sturla's sons Snorri and Þórð were now grown; Þórð dedicated himself to the priesthood and was in every respect a man of easy temper; but Snorri became a very quarrelsome man and kept at his command rather a large following. He and his father were much unlike one another in temperament.

In the autumn Snorri moved south to Hauk's place at Álftanes in Borgarfjörð and established a homestead there. He had a fairly large following during that winter and the countryside seemed rather uneasy. Hrafn felt the greatest dislike for Snorri, who for this reason became extremely unpopular in that district. Finally Snorri thought he could not put up with this any longer, so he and his men left the district. To begin with, Snorri went north to his father. The enmity between Sturla and Hrafn was then at its height. In the course of the winter Vigfús Gunnsteinsson and Snorri Sturluson with Eyr-Snorri met together at Ljárskógar. They swore friendship with one another and spoke of how each was to support the others against Hrafn if that became necessary; they felt certain that none of them would ever prosper so long as Hrafn's power remained so strong. A little later Snorri

Pálsson sent a messenger to Hrafn asking him to send back a big, broad, sharp axe. The messenger was also to find out what was going on in that district. Hrafn sent no axe, saying that he did not have one, but—"I will send one later on."

The messenger heard one of Hrafn's men say that Hrafn thought they intended that axe to be the instrument of his own death.

That spring, after Easter, Sturla, his son Snorri, and Snorri Pálsson made ready to ride against Hrafn. But Vigfús withdrew from their expedition when the time came. Snorri said to his father that he didn't place much trust in men who stood aside and refused to live up to their agreements.

Sturla said: "Vigfús is not going to cause us any harm, but because of our friend Hrafn we will keep out of sight as we go through the Dales."

The two Snorris then said: "It's perfectly possible to do that, but then we will have made our journey for nothing."

Sturla said, "It's true that up to now I have constantly held back from this expedition but now I have no mind to urge you to remain at home, for I know that you will go in any case. But I have a foreboding that great misfortune must needs be ours from this expedition, if things turn out as I fear they will."

They said that he couldn't clearly see the outcome, and they rode south across the heath and stationed themselves in the woods down below Grísartunga. Then they sent a man down to Norðrá to see if the river could be forded, for the waters were extremely high, and to find out also whether Hrafn was at home in Stafaholt. The messenger returned and reported that the river could not be crossed, so they turned down along it and so on out to Mýrar.

Hrafn got wind of their expedition from the Dales; somewhat later Snorri Markusson came to Hrafn, sent by Vigfús to give this news to Hrafn. But it seemed to Hrafn that Vigfús might have sent word about this expedition more speedily if he had been really zealous in the matter. Hrafn gathered men to him at once and on the following day they rode out across Norðrá. There they learned that Sturla had ridden out to Mýrar, and

they rode on until they could see they wouldn't catch them this time. Snorri Sturluson and Snorri Pálsson rode west now to Skógarströnd where they got a ship and went on to the West Fjords, causing some trouble on their way. When Sturla and his men had got away Hrafn and his group rode home to Stafaholt and with that matters came to a standstill between the two parties.

Somewhat later Þuríð, Sturla's daughter and Hrafn's wife, rode from home west to Arnarfjörð to their homestead at Eyr. The purpose of her journey was really to take Hrafn's message to the men of the West Fjords—that they come from the west to meet him at the place agreed upon, for he intended to attack Sturla and his men when they were returning from the west. Among those men were Einar of the Vatnsfjörð family, Loft Gíslason of Sand, the men of Súðavík, and all the finest men from the West Fjords. The men of the West Fjords began at once to make ready and were so successful that they moved a large ship across the heath much faster than seemed at all possible for men to do. Hrafn collected his company and moved west to Skógarströnd. He sent word to Guðmund Böðvarsson that he should come west to meet him in Breiðafjörð and bring with him from Snæfellsnes whatever ships he could obtain. Böðvar Þórðarson told Guðmund to go by himself in this instance and to give Sturla as much help as he could.

Guðmund replied that he intended no harm to Sturla but added, "This I know—he'd get little help from me if I stayed home."

When he was ready Guðmund set out and had a large group of men. When he reached Helgafel, Ari Guðlaugsson and some of Hrafn's men were already there. They told Guðmund that Hrafn had reached Eyr, and that a great many men from the West Fjords had arrived with a great number of ships and a large following. Börk from Svínanes and his men had pursued Eyr-Snorri; he had got away to land but fell into Hrafn's hands and had then been given quarter. But Snorri Sturluson was in Öxney when the men of the West Fjords arrived. He and his men were asleep and were not aware of anything until a man

called out that their enemies were at hand. Snorri and his companions then escaped to the chapel but the men of the West Fjords surrounded the chapel and offered conflicting suggestions as to whether the chapel should be a refuge for them; and they decided to wait for Hrafn's arrival. Sturla was then west at Staðarfel.

During the day Hrafn reached Öxney and he and Snorri talked with each other. Snorri asked quarter for himself and his men, and Hrafn said that he would promise him that this time. Then Hrafn learned that Sturla was inland below Staðarfel and he headed there with the men of Borgarfjörð, nearly the entire company. When Sturla saw many ships putting into land he said it must be the enemy's force,

"Because there are many more ships there than our men had. Hrafn and his men must have arrived, for this is what I dreamt last night. We must ride away north across the fells to Skarðsströnd."

As they rode up on the crest of the hill they saw one man after another come off the ships and they thought that they recognized Hrafn at the head of the company. They rode away then until their horses were exhausted; only one horse, which belonged to Guttorm, was not worn out, and Sturla rode that one horse. These three were together: Sturla, Guttorm, and Þorbjörn; they escaped north across the fells to Skarðsströnd. Óláf and his brother Þorstein each took to flight in his own way; Óláf hid himself, but Þorstein reached the chapel at Arastaðir.

Nikulás Þórarinsson[3] overtook Hrafn and his men on the slope of the ridge; Hrafn was very tired by then and many of his men were worn out. Hrafn said that Nikulás was to strike out at once after those who were farthest ahead, if he was not exhausted. Nikulás asked if he should use his weapon against Sturla, in case Sturla was captured.

"I don't yet know," said Hrafn, "for I don't yet know if you will catch him."

Nikulás went on then until he caught up with Óláf Óláfsson; Óláf said that Sturla had got away and Nikulás thought that this was strange. Some of Hrafn's men now turned back in order

to look for Þorstein; they discovered him in the chapel at Arastaðir, brought him out, and killed him there.

Hrafn then came north to Skarð where he told Bjarni Snorrason to go out to look for Sturla. But he refused to go unless he were granted quarter, so Hrafn granted this. Bjarni then went off on his way until he found Sturla; he gave him quarter in Hrafn's name while Sturla for his part promised truce. They agreed then on a meeting at Dögurðurnes. Hrafn and Sturla met there at the appointed time; Óláf Hjörleifsson, the abbot, and Guðmund Böðvarsson were there. The solution of their quarrel then was that Sturla's men were to receive quarter for life and limb but Hrafn alone was to determine the settlement. And it was decided that Sturla was to go abroad in the summer from Eyr, but that Snorri and Helga were to establish themselves at Staðarhól, while Hrafn kept his homestead at Stafaholt.

When Sturla was traveling to the ship to sail for Norway, Hallvarð gullskó returned to Iceland, as was written earlier.[4] He went to his kinsman Þórð at Þingvellir, and told him the news from abroad: King Hákon was away from Norway while King Magnús, the queen, and Gaut of Mel were in charge of governing the country. Then Sturla decided to win their favor, the moment he knew that King Hákon was out of the country, for he feared his enmity most of all. Sturla traveled on south then to Eyr; Gizur jarl was there and showed his hostility to Sturla. Sturla then recited this:

1. Now we all know
—Mighty this ruler—
What a great man must be,
What new foes afford.[5]

2

After that Sturla sailed out to Norway from Eyr, with almost no possessions. They had, however, a good voyage and made land at Bergen. King Magnús was there and also Gaut of Mel. Sturla went at once to meet Gaut, who received him well and said, "Are you Sturla the Icelander?"

"That is so," he said.

Gaut said, "You are welcome then at my table like other Sturlungs."

Sturla said, "It is not certain that I could not find a better choice."

He went to stay with Gaut then and told him clearly about his coming out to Norway. Gaut told him in return that he had been spoken of very disparagingly to King Magnús and even more so to King Hákon. A little later Gaut and Sturla went to King Magnús. Gaut greeted the king, who received him well; then Sturla greeted the king but he made no reply.

The king said then, "Tell me, Gaut, who is this man who is with you?"

"This man is the skáld Sturla Þórðarson, who has now come to throw himself upon your mercy. And I think, sir, he is a man of discernment."

The king said, "What we think is that he would not have come here of his own accord; still, he will put this to the test when he meets my father."

And Gaut said, "Just so, for I think he has poems to offer you and your father."

"Very likely," said the king, "I will not have him killed, but he is not going to enter my service."

Gaut and Sturla then went away, and when they reached their lodging Gaut said to Sturla, "The king seemed to me somewhat unwilling to accept you; still, you have safe conduct. But I think men must have spoken very ill of you indeed."

Sturla replied, "I don't doubt it. Indeed, I think I see that Hrafn must have spread bad reports of me; in Iceland, now, it seems to me that everything is tangled up together—big and little matters, true and false."

The following day Gaut went down to the king's quarters. When he returned he and Sturla talked together and Gaut said, "Things are arranged for you with the king who now wants you to accompany him when he heads south."

Sturla said, "The king must needs make the decision, but I am in no hurry to go away from here."

He made ready for the journey with the king, however, and his name went on the ship's list. He boarded the ship, but few men had yet come; he had a sleeping hammock and a traveling-chest and sat down on the foredeck. Somewhat later the king, with a group of men, came out on the quay. Sturla stood up then, bowed to him and greeted him. But the king made no reply and went aft along the ship to the quarterdeck. They set sail that day, heading south along the coast. But in the evening while men were opening up the supplies Sturla sat quiet and no one invited him to eat. Then one of the king's servants on the ship came up and asked Sturla if he had anything to eat or drink. He said he had nothing. The servant went to the king and spoke to him privately, then went forward in the ship again to Sturla and said, "You are to eat with Þórir munn and Erlend magi."

And they received him at their table, although rather coldly. When men lay down to sleep one of the king's fo'c'sle-men asked who was to entertain them with stories. At this, most of them remained silent. Then the man said, "Sturla the Icelander, will you tell a story?"

"If you like," said Sturla.

Then he told them the saga of Huld[6] better and more knowledgeably than any of them had ever before heard it. Many of them pressed forward to the foredeck, wanting to hear as clearly as possible, so that there was a great crowd there. The queen asked, "What is that crowd of men on the foredeck?"

A man said, "The men up there want to hear the saga which the Icelander is telling."

She said, "What saga is that?"

And he replied, "It's about a great troll-wife, a good story, and it is being well told."

The king told her to pay no attention to this but go to sleep. She said, "I think this Icelander must be a good fellow and much less worthy of dispraise than he is said to be."

The king remained silent and they went to sleep for the night. The following morning there was no wind, so that the king's ship was in the same place. When the men were sitting at table

during the day the king sent to Sturla some dishes from his table. Sturla's table companions were pleased at this, and said, "Things look a lot better for us with you here than we expected if this sort of thing goes on."

When the men had eaten, the queen sent word to Sturla asking him to come to her and bring with him the saga about the troll-wife. Sturla went aft to the quarterdeck then and greeted the king and queen. The king received his greeting shortly but the queen received it graciously and easily. The queen then bade him tell that same story which he had told in the evening. He did so, and spoke for a great part of the day. When he had told the story the queen and many others thanked him and thought him a knowledgeable and a wise man. But the king made no comment, only smiled slightly. But Sturla thought he saw that the king's temper of mind was lighter than on the preceding day. He told the king then that he had composed a poem about him and also about his father, "And I would like you to give them a hearing."

The queen said, "Let him recite the poem, for I am told he is a very great skáld, and his poem must be exceptionally good."

The king bade him recite the poem, ". . . which you say you have composed about me."

Sturla then recited until he came to the end, and the queen said, "I think this poem is well written."

The king said, "Can you understand it clearly?"

She replied, "I want you to believe that is so, sir."

The king said, "I have heard that Sturla is good at composing poems."

Sturla paid his respects to the king and queen and went to his bed. The king gave no sign to set sail that day; in the evening before he went to sleep he had Sturla summoned before him. When Sturla came he greeted the king and then said, "What is your pleasure, sir?"

The king called for a silver goblet filled with wine, drank some of it and then handed it to Sturla, saying, "Your friend drinks to your health with wine!"[7]

Sturla said, "God be praised that this is so."

"Exactly so," said the king. "And now I want you to recite the poem you have composed about my father."

Sturla recited the poem, and when he had finished people praised him greatly, most of all the queen. The king said, "To my way of thinking, you recite better than the Pope."

The king asked Sturla about his coming out to Norway and Sturla told him clearly and fully about his quarrels with Hrafn.

"And now I know, sir, that my enemies have not spoken well of me to your father or to you, and have not reported me fairly. Now, like all other men, I am in need both of God's mercy and of your protection, sir; my fate is entirely in your hands."

The king answered graciously and mildly, saying, "I have heard your poem, Sturla, and I think that you must be one of the best among skálds. This reward I grant you now—you are to return home with me in peace and with assurances of protection. But when you and my father meet each other he is to have the right to decide for himself what to believe. However, I will speak on your behalf."

The queen thanked the king and said she thought Sturla one of the best of men. The king then warmly received Sturla into his court and entertained him well and graciously. The queen showed him great friendliness and so did others thereafter. Soon after this Sturla became a great friend of the king, who often sought his advice and commissioned him with the highly responsible task of composing the saga of his father King Hákon, according to his own account and the reports of the wisest men. But before the king had the saga composed King Hákon died in Orkney; throughout the North men thought this a weighty occurrence and a very grave loss.

On Sturla's second journey abroad he again stayed with King Magnús, according to written materials[8] and his own account. He became first a retainer of King Magnús and next a member of his household.[9] He composed many poems about King Magnús and for these he received many marks of distinction. Later Sturla's wife Helga, Þórð's daughter, came out from Iceland with her sons. On Sturla's account, she was received with great honor by the queen. Þórð Sturluson came to Norway; he came

to the king, was consecrated to the priesthood and became royal chaplain to Magnús; he won great esteem and died there.

Sturla composed a *flokkr*[10] in twelve verses about Birgir Jarl of Sweden and was rewarded for this with a gold-threaded silk cloak, a short-sleeved tunic of scarlet silk, and a splendid cowl-hat. When King Magnús and Birgir Jarl met together, Sturla presented the *drápa*[11] which he had composed about Birgir Jarl. The jarl thanked him heartily for the poem and invited Sturla to come to Sweden with him: "Nor shall you lack either good horses or ready money there."

Sturla thanked the jarl warmly for this offer, "But the king has given me leave to return to Iceland."

The king turned aside and smiled, for he and Sturla had not talked about this. However, the king gave him leave to sail back to Iceland that summer.[12]

The summer following King Hákon's death Bishop Brand Jónsson died at Hólar. Then Óláf the Bishop of Greenland left Iceland. That autumn before Michaelmas Gizur had Þórð Andréasson killed.

3

It is reported that Sturla brought back to Iceland the Law-book[13] which King Magnús had commissioned. He was then appointed Lawman for all of Iceland; at that time all the law of Iceland was changed. In the autumn he took over the homestead at Fagrdal from the bóndi Skeggi.

Þórð Narfason spent that winter with Sturla. One time during the winter Bárð the son of Einar Ásgrímsson came there to see Sturla; he had at that time come by ship. The following day, after they had gone away, a great storm broke out at sea and the men were frightened lest they be shipwrecked. Þórð went in and out looking to see if the storm abated. Once when he came inside Sturla said to him, "Cheer up, Þórð, for your friend Bárð is not going to drown on this voyage."

"You can never tell," said Þórð.

But they learned shortly afterwards that it was as Sturla had said.

Somewhat later in the spring Bárð became ill. Then Þórð asked Sturla whether Bárð would ever get up from his sickbed or not.

"I understand why you ask this now," said Sturla. "Hand me my wax tablets."

He busied himself with them for a while, and then a little later said, "Bárð will die from this sickness."

And so it turned out.

Sturla moved his homestead to Staðarhól and held the position of lawman there until quarrels arose between the clergy and the laity about the administration and possessions of the see.[14] Sturla then relinquished the post of Lawman and held himself apart from all the disagreements which grew out of this issue. Many people heard Bishop Árni say that Sturla must have enjoyed some reward for having thus pulled out of these difficulties —and they thought this a comment not without meaning.[15]

Jón Einarsson then became Lawman and then Erlend sterk. Sturla made his home on Fagrey but got land at Staðarhól for his son Snorri as a homestead. Sturla lived on Fagrey greatly respected until he died, one night after St. Óláf's Day.[16] He was almost seventy when he died. His body was carried out to Staðarhól and buried there at the Church of the Apostle Peter whom he had loved most of all the saints.

Glossary of Nicknames and Names of Weapons

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alikarl	fatty, fat carl
auðgi	wealthy
auðmaðr	wealthy man
auga	eye
balti	?
barmr	brim, border, edge
baulufótr	cow-foot
beiskalda, i	sour-puss, shrewish
berfættr	bare-legged (like a friar?)
birkibeinn	birch-leg
blundr	sleepy, slumberer
Blöðru-	blister, bubble; windbag
brattr	steep
brennir	fiery
bríkarnef	flatnose
brúðr	bride
bryti	steward
bukkr	ram, billygoat
chaim	Cain
Darr-	spear- (a duelist?)
daufi	deaf, dopey
Digr-	stout, boastful (?)
djákn	deacon
dragi	deadweight
dráttarhamarr	trip-hammer
dritloki	dirty end
drumbr	sluggish, sluggard
dýri	noble (honorable?)
dælski	"from the Dale," (moody?)

eldboðungr	old, baggy one (?); fiery messenger (?)
errubeinsstúpr	?
eyrgoðr	priest of Eyr; brassy priest
faxi	mane
feni	boggy
fipr	meddler
fjósi	cowman
fjöruskeifr	clumsy, awkward shoreman
flatnef	flatnose
forkr	pole, lanky
Freysgoði	priest of Frey
fróði	learned, scholar
galinn	mad
ganimaðr	hothead
gargan	serpent
gassimaðr	wag, boisterous fellow
gemsungr	giber
gestr	retainer, guest, follower
gilli	servant (of Christ?)
glammaðr	noisy man
glysfa	?
grautnefr	pudding-nose
grikkr	Greek (served in Varangian Guard?)
gríss	young boar, very strong
Grænlendingr	Greenlander
grön	mustache
gufu	slow, creepy
gullskór	gold-shoe
hagi	handyman, craftsman
hallfrekr	lopsided, deformed
halti	lame
Handar-	grasping (?), miser (?)
harðráði	tyrannical, hard-ruler
hárfagri	fair-haired
heilagr	holy, hallowed
helgi, a	saint, holy
heljarskinn	Black Skin, swarthy

herði brendr — broad-shouldered
hnjóðhamarr — rivet (?) -hammer
hrafnhauss — raven-skull
hrakauga — evil eye
hreimr — scream, cry
hrútr — ram
humla — hops, (brewer?)
hvítakollr — white-haired
hvítaskáld — white poet
hvíti — white, (a Christian?)
ísungr — an ice-bear (?)
járnauga — iron-eye
járnbúkr — iron-trunk
kaggi — vat
kagill — lookout
kakali — little vat; little pot; stammerer, chatterer, cackler
kaldaljós — *ignis fatuus*, phantom
kamphundr — dog-whiskers
kampi — beard
kappgnógr — vigorous, impetuous
karf — unsteady
kárhöfði — curly-haired
Kárin — penance, Forty Day Fast
karl — fellow
karlsungi — young fellow
kastanrassi — jutting-arse, bottom, big-bum
káti — merry
kaupungr — trader
keis — round belly
keldna- — living at Springs-
kennimaðr — teacher
keppr — cudgel, club
kerlingar-nef — old woman's beak, Punch-Nose
Kinnskjóni — (horse) piebald cheek or head
kjappi — billy-goat
knappsöðull — stud-saddle, knobby saddle

Knarrar-, Knorr	(ship) cutter
knarrarbringa	big bosom (like a ship's chest)
kollr	head, pate
kornasylgja	Korni's belt (see footnote, vol. I, to this name)
kórkjappi	cope-priest
kotkarl	cottage-carl, boor
krabbi	crab
kráka	crow
krákunef	beak, crow-nose
krókr	crooked, deformed
kuflungr	cowl-man (member of a party in Norway)
kuggi	?
kúlubak	humpback
kumbaldi	hovel, blockhead
kyrri	quiet, gentle
körtr	short-horn (reference to penis?)
kægil	see *kagill*
lági, lágr	low
langadjákn	long-deacon
langhöfða	long-head
langr	long, tall
laugarnef	bath-nose (sniffer?)
lavarðr	lord, master
liðsmaðr	army-man
lindiáss	linden-ridge
lítilskeita	small shaft, small piece (penis?)
lundarskalli	bald-pate from Lund
lygna	liar, cool customer
lýri	forelock (*lyrgr?*)
læknir	leech, doctor
magi	belly, maw, stomach
magri	lean
máni	moon
matkrákr	meat-crow, glutton
meyla	little maiden
mikli, mikill	big, huge

mildi	generous
munnkr	monk
munnr	mouth, big mouth
murtr, i	little fellow, titch
nautatík	neatherd's-dog, shepherd's-dog
nef, nefja	beaky, big snout
óði	mad, violent
ofláti	dandy
ógnarbrandrinn	(ship) cutter
oþinsjóðr	over-generous
ormr-í-augi	evil-eyed, basilisk
ósvífi	stunted (?), canny (?), sharp (?)
rábiti	race-horse (Arabian steed?)
rafa kollr	yellow head
ranga	crooked, (twister?)
ranglátr	unjust, vicious
rauðr, i	red, ginger
Rauðasíða	(ship) Red Flanks
rauðskeggr	red-beard
raunarmaðr	man of trials, much-tried man
ríki	powerful, boss
ristarbein	instep-bone (obscure)
rosti	brawler, clown
rotinn	scraggy hair, bald patch
sála	soul (?)
Sauða-	Sheep-
Saura-	Sour-
seki	outlaw
seli	seal
Sigfússnaut	(byrnie) Sigfús' inheritance
Sindri	(ship) forger, the name of a dwarf
skakkr	wry, twister
skalli	bald-pate
skammhöndungr	stumpy, withered hand
skarði	harelip
skeggbarn	bearded baby
skeggi	rough, backwoodsman

skeggja	bearded lady
skeifa	horseshoe, twister
skipbrotsmaðr	survivor of shipwreck
skólpa	?
skraf	chatterer
skrauthanzka	fancy-gloves
skröggr	monster-giant or goblin, monstrous
skyrhnakkr	curd-bone (?), "milk-toast"
slakkafótr	twisted foot
sleggju-	club-
slembir	sham, phoney
sloppr	shifty (?)
snati	dog
sneis	sausage-skewer, skinny
snoppulangr	long-snout
snókr	snake
snúinbrýni	curly eyelashes
Snækollr	(ship) snow-mound
soðkrókr	flesh-hook, kettle-hook
soll	swill
sópi	sot, boozer
sorti	dark, gloomy
Spak, spaki	prophet, wise man
stafsendi	tree-stump, stick-end
standali	post
stál	steel
sterkr, i	strong
stjúpr	stepson
svarti	black, swarthy
Svartleggja	(axe) Black-legs
sveimr	bustling, busy
sveitarbót	boon companion, life of the party
tiggi	prince, leader
tittlingr	little sparrow
tjörskinn	dark skin
Trékyllir	(ship) wood-bag
ungi	young

usti	?
val bráð	with a red birthmark
valfrekr	bloodthirsty, savage, killer
vandræðamagr	trouble's cousin
várbelg	case-shell, pod
vegglágr	wall-layer
végeirr	holy-spear
Víga-	killer-, slayer-, duelist-
örvi	speedy (generous?)

Notes and References

Notes and References

These footnotes contain references to articles and books not included in the Bibliography for Volume I. They may be considered an addition to that Bibliography, which is printed in Volume I only, but is intended to serve both volumes.

Introduction

1. Hallberg, Peter, *Den islandska sagan*, trans. Paul Schach, *The Icelandic Saga* (University of Nebraska Press, 1962), pp. 56–58.

2. Ólafia Einarsdóttir, "Studier i Kronologisk Metode i tidlig Historieskrivning," *Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis*, XIII (Copenhagen, 1964).

3. *Ibid.*, English summary, p. 361.

4. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, "Sagnaritun Oddaverja, nokkrar athuganir," *Studia Islandica*, I (Reykjavík, 1937); Turville-Petre, G., "Notes on the Intellectual History of the Icelanders," *History*, XXVII (1942); *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford, 1953), chap. vii.

5. Poole, R. L., *Chronicles and Annals* (Oxford, 1926); *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford, 1934).

6. Ólafia Einarsdóttir, *op. cit.*, pp. 319–26: "For the period up to about 1160 the Icelandic annals are poor in notices concerning domestic affairs; but after that time and up to about 1260 the annals carry numerous particulars about events having occurred in Iceland, especially in the first half of the 13th century. The great majority of these notices are borrowed from the various contemporary historical sagas. At the end of the . . . *Íslendinga saga* in 1263 the notices in the Icelandic annals change perceptibly in character. Information about purely Icelandic affairs now become [sic] rarer again, whereas the Norwegian material . . . becomes prevailing again." (English summary, p. 363)

7. Heller, Rolf, "*Laxdæla saga* and *Sturlunga saga*," *Arkiv for nordisk filologi*, vol. 76 (1961), pp. 112–33; Hallberg, Peter, "Óláfr Þórðarson hvítaskáld, *Knytlinga saga* och *Laxdæla saga*," *Studia Islandica*, 22. These two essays develop the thorough stylistic sort of analysis suggested by Springer, and Hallberg, in discussing the possi-

bility that Óláf hvítaskáld, Sturla's older brother, was the author of *Laxdæla saga* (following suggestions by Sigurður Nordal and E. Ól. Sveinsson), gives cogent arguments for considering Þórð Hítnesing the author of *The Saga of Þorgils skarði*. The search for named authors has combined fruitfully with the most skillful analyses of narrative structure and style.

8. Simpson, Jacqueline, "Advocacy and Art in *Guðmundar saga Dýra*," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, vol. xv, Part IV (1961), pp. 327–45.

9. Heller, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–24: Heller discusses the deliberate use of historical material for artistic purposes, and thus shows the ways in which the historian's use of words, motives, and rhetorical devices often influenced the writing of fiction in Iceland and was in turn influenced by it.

10. Jones, Gwyn, "History and Fiction in the Sagas of the Icelanders," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, vol. xiii, Part V (1952–53), pp. 285–306.

11. Springer, Otto, "The Style of the Old Icelandic Sagas," *Journal of English anl Germanic Philology*, vol. XXXVIII (1939), pp. 107–28; Schach, Paul, "Some Forms of Writer Intrusion in the *Íslendingasögur*," *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1970), pp. 128–56; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, ed., *Njáls saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit, vol. XII (Reykjavík, 1954), "Formáli," pp. lxviii–cxlix; Maxwell, Ian, "Patterns in *Njáls saga*," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, vol. xv, Parts 1–2 (1957–59), pp. 17–47. Professor Maxwell's study of the structure and style of *Njáls saga* offers new and very useful approaches to the analysis of artistic forms in the *Sturlunga* histories. Especially his "principle of the integrity of episodes" in the sagas ought to be kept in mind in reading the *Íslendinga*, and considered with E. Ól. Sveinsson's "Formáli," sections 3 through 7.

12. Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* (Copenhagen, 1900), II, part 2, pp. 717–43.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 731.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 732.

15. Jones, Gwyn, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1968). But Professor Jones' critical portrait of Snorri as a historian in no way diminishes—quite the contrary—his portrait of Snorri as an artist.

16. Glendinning, R. J., *Träume und Vorbedeutung in der Íslendinga saga Sturla Þórðarsons*, unpub. dissert. University of Freiburg (1969). This sensitive and thorough analysis of Sturla's use of dreams, prophecies, and prophetic-allusive strophes offers the first scholarly interpretation of Sturla's fictional techniques.

17. Vigfusson, G., ed., *Sturlunga saga*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1878), "Prolegomena," p. cxviii.

18. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, Kristján Eldjárn, eds., *Sturlunga saga,* 2 vols. (Reykjayík, 1946), "Formáli," II, p. xlvii.

19. Brown, Ursula, ed., *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða* (Oxford, 1952), "Introduction," pp. xvii–xviii.

20. Vigfusson, *op. cit.,* p. cvii.

21. *Ibid.,* p. cviii.

The Tale of Geirmund heljarskin

1. The skáld Bragi is the oldest known Norse *skáld,* or poet, of the early ninth century.

2. strophe: see *Origines Islandicae,* ed. and tr. Vigfusson and Powell (Oxford, 1905), I, 88.

3. See Glossary of Nicknames.

4. Hrók svarti, one of Hálf's Champions.

5. *heldu í vestrvíking:* carried on expeditions to the western islands, Great Britain and Ireland.

6. *skotpenningr:* scot-money.

7. *friðland:* country any vikings agreed not to plunder and therefore considered a safe refuge whenever they ceased raiding.

8. Helgi magri Eyvindarson was one of the well-known early settlers in Iceland.

9. *bóndi:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 3, note 1.

10. *Végeir,* from *vé* (heathendom) and *geirr* (spear) thus the meaning "holy spear."

11. Hákon was one of Harald hárfagri's jarls.

12. Bishop Jón, the first bishop of Hólar, 1106-1121.

13. Bishop Magnús of Skálaholt, 1134–1148.

The Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði

The abbreviated reference "*Þorgils saga*" is to Ursula Brown, *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða* (Oxford, 1952), followed by the number of page and line in her footnotes.

1. *bóndi:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 3, note 1.

2. *Þingman:* a follower of a goði who owed certain duties to the latter in issues brought to the Þing. (See *Þorgils saga,* 1/20.)

3. shore-drift (*reki*): goods from a shipwreck drifted ashore and belonging to the owner of the shore.

4. *skáld:* poet, historian, storyteller.

5. *goðorð:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 2, note 3.

6. Court of Confiscation (or of Execution, *féránsdómr*): see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 9, note 5.

7. a dependent on a Quarter: the child of an outlaw whose goods

were confiscated and whose children must then be housed and fed by the other inhabitants of that Quarter until the children could manage for themselves. (See *Þorgils saga,* 3/24.)

8. hundred (*hundrað*): see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 5, note 3; *aurar* (sing., *eyrir*): see *Þorgils saga,* 7/23.

9. *Finngerðarson,* son of Finngerð, a feminine name.

10. As Ursula Brown notes, this is "less than one-third" of the wergild which could have been claimed for Hneitir (*Þorgils saga,* 9/24).

11. Alþing and Þing: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 4, note 3.

12. Jórsala-Sigurð: Sigurð the Jerusalem-farer, the son of Magnús Óláfsson, was King of Norway 1103–1130.

13. outlawry: see *Þorgils saga,* 10/12-13.

14. See *Þorgils saga,* 13/5.

15. Ingimund Einarsson: his aunt, Hallbera, was Þorgils' mother.

16. the movable benches were those used in addition to the fixed benches for large gatherings or celebrations; to them the less important guests were assigned.

17. strophe 9: for part of lines 3-4 no convincing interpretation has been established. (See *Sturlunga saga,* I, 581 and *Þorgils saga,* 16/27.)

18. *sáld:* a unit of measurement for both liquids and solids. (See *Þorgils saga,* 17/21.) The *guild-brothers* are mentioned here and in *Sturlu saga* (see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 4, note 4). For a full discussion, see *Þorgils saga,* 17/22.

19. Hröngvið: an important character in the rhymed narrative about Hrómund Grípsson (see *Þorgils saga,* 18/1-3; *Saga-Book of the Viking Society,* vol. xiii, part 2 [1948]).

20. Liðmen's King: see *Þorgils saga,* 18/2, for explanation of this title.

21. *Hrómundr Grípsson:* the central character in a popular story which is extant in a fifteenth-century rhymed narrative.

22. lying stories (*lygisögur*): this is the term generally given to those later sagas which contained largely romantic and fantastic elements, from European and Near Eastern sources. (See Margaret Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* [London, 1934], pp. 5–6 and 12 ff.)

23. *Ormr Barreyjarskáld* (Orm the Poet of Barra): no saga is extant about this poet, although two of his verses are cited in Snorri's *Edda* (114, 116). (See *Þorgils saga,* 18/7.)

24. *flokkr:* a poetic form, simpler than the *drápa,* allowing for variety in number of verses and syllables, but in skaldic meter.

25. Dumb Bell Days (*dymbildagar*): the days in Holy Week when

a wooden clapper was used for ringing the church bells. (See *Þorgils saga,* 19/29.)

26. Þing-hallowing (*Þinghelgin*): see *Þorgils saga,* 24/13 for full description of the goði's consecrating the Þing the evening before the Assembly began its work.

27. Law Rock (*Lögberg*): see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 34, note 1.

28. Each goði could appoint his own Þingmen as judges, and thus influence their decisions. The number of judges in each Quarter Court was not laid down precisely, but it is clear from this passage that an increase in the number of judges while a case was still open would be unfair. (See Nordal, *Íslenzk Menning* [Reykjavík, 1942], pp. 126–27, and *Þorgils saga,* 27/1.)

29. Byrgisbooth (*Byrgisbúð*): this booth was built on the flat tongue of lava projecting at the fork between two crevasses. (See description in Kaalund, I, 104 ff. and see *Þorgils saga,* 27/5.)

30. Court of Execution: see note 6 above.

31. *hundred of timber:* see note 2 above; this indicates the value not just the amount of the timber.

32. Bishop Magnús Gizurarson was a grandson of Hall Teitsson; he was Bishop at the important see at Skálaholt 1216–1237.

33. strophe 13: Hafliði was from the north, Hall from the south, and Þórð from the west.

34. May 1, 1121.

35. June 24, 1121.

36. Tacitus (*Germania,* xi) and many northern sources give evidence that a host of men beating on their weapons showed their approval of a decision or plan of action.

37. strophe 14: in line 3 in the Icelandic there is a play on the meaning of *Þingvellir,* valley or plain of the Þing.

38. strophe 15: "Goddess" is a "translation" of the name Gerðr, one of the goddesses.

39. In Ursula Brown's text the additional phrase in this sentence is: "ef aðrir ráða eigi fyrri á oss" (p. 40). And, as she points out, "Hall is adding two conditions to that which Hafliði makes: 'and provided that you succeed in dictating the terms, (and) if the others do not attack us first.'" (*Þorgils saga,* 40/20–21.)

40. Fifth Court Oath: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chapter 10, note 1.

41. strophes 16 and 17: Grain-of-Sand translates the strophic term *Sandkorn,* a play on Hall's name (*hallr* means stone, boulder).

42. *cow-gild,* same idea as wergild, although the amount named here is more than five times greater than that customary for one man (*Þorgils saga,* 44/16.)

The Genealogical Tables

1. In *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 2, Álof is said to be the daughter of Þorgeir Kaggason.

2. The skáld Markús Skeggjason held the office of Lawspeaker from 1094 until 1107.

3. Brand Sæmundarson, Bishop of Hólar 1163–1201.

4. Brand Jónsson, Bishop of Hólar 1263–1264.

5. In *Saga of Þórð kakali,* chap. 7, Helga is called Þórdís; in one manuscript of *Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson* she is called Helga.

6. The priest Brand Þórisson.

7. St. Edmund, King of Mercia, killed by Danish invaders in the year 870.

8. The office of Lawspeaker was held by the following men: Hrafn Úlfheðinsson (1135–1138), Úlfheðin Gunnarsson (1108–1116), Gunnar fróði Þorgrímsson (1063–1065 and 1075.)

The Tale of the Men of Haukadal

1. Teit was a priest and the son of Bishop Ísleif Gizurarson of Skálaholt (1056–1080).

2. There has been a great deal of scholarly dispute about the accuracy of this account of the Öxará (the River Öx), which winds through Þingvellir, but its location is so favorable for the formation of ox-bow lakes that one must assume that the river has altered its course many times since Iceland was first discovered.

3. The first element in the place name *Reyðarmúli* is deduced from *reyðr,* the Old Icelandic word for a kind of trout (*salmo alphinus*).

4. This is inaccurate; the references to Gizur are in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar,* chaps. 81, 84, 95.

5. Ísleif was consecrated bishop in 1056; Harald was king of Norway 1046–1066.

6. Kol Þorkelsson, Bishop of Vík in Norway at the beginning of the twelfth century, died in 1120.

7. Jón Ögmundarsson was Bishop of Hólar 1106–1121.

8. Pope Leo IX died in 1054; Victor II (1055–1057) was Pope when Ísleif was consecrated.

9. Óláf the Quiet, King of Norway 1066–1093.

10. The "hundred" here is the Germanic "great hundred" (120). (See *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 3.) It is impossible to determine the population of Iceland from this passage. When ecclesiastical tithes were made legal in Iceland in 1096, it was estimated that the number of Icelanders who then paid the *"Þingfarar-kaup"* (i.e., a tax levied on every "franklin" in order to defray the legal expenses incurred at the Alþing) was 4,560. But there is no satisfactory equa-

tion that enables us to deduce the ratio of those who paid this tax to those who did not.

11. Bergþór was Lawspeaker 1117–1122.

12. Þorlák was Bishop of Skálaholt 1118–1133.

13. Bishop Gizur died in 1118, so, according to our author, Ingólf first discovered Iceland in 868. The error is probably due to the author's misreading of one of the annals in which significant Icelandic events were often recorded with reference to even more well-known international incidents. It is generally accepted that Ingólf came to Iceland in 874.

14. Hall Þórarinsson died in 1089.

15. The "I" refers to Ari fróði, the author of *Íslendingabók*. (See Introduction to Vol. I, p. 31 ff.) The compiler of our Tale had copied this sentence from Ari's *bók*. Christianity was legally recognized in Iceland in 1000. St. Martin's Day was on November 11 in 1089.

16. Gizur Hallsson was Lawspeaker 1181–1200.

17. Sigurð Haraldsson ruled Norway 1136–1155.

18. This book, presumably in Latin, has not been preserved.

19. Teit Bersason was elected Bishop of Skálaholt after the death of Bishop Pál (1195–1211), but he died in Norway in 1214 before he was consecrated.

20. Jóra was the daughter of Klæng Þorsteinsson (Bishop of Skálaholt, 1152–1176) and his wife, Yngvil Þorgils' daughter.

21. There were legal hindrances to the matrimony of Þorvald and Jóra. (Þorvald was a priest and Jóra was the daughter of a bishop.) One need not doubt that an Archbishop of Niðarós did allow them to live together for a ten-year period but not Archbishop Guttorm who was elevated in 1215 whereas Jóra died in 1196. Eystein Erlendsson, Archbishop of Niðarós until 1188, probably granted this dispensation to Þorvald and Jóra.

22. Ketil Þorláksson was Lawspeaker 1259–1262.

The Saga of Gudmund Arason the Priest

1. This was the most southerly Icelandic farm in Eystribyggd in Greenland and is called Ikigait by the Greenland Eskimo. It was probably abandoned by Norse settlers in the fifteenth century; but, for the whole question of Icelandic settlements in Greenland, see Gwyn Jones, *The Norse Atlantic Saga* (London, 1964).

2. Brand Knakansson. (See *Saga of Guðmund dýri*, chap. 10.)

3. i.e., September 26.

4. King Ingi Haraldsson was killed in battle near Oslo, 1161.

5. Jarl Erling Skakki (d. 1179) was the father of King Magnús (1164–1184), the first Norwegian king to be crowned and consecrated by an archbishop.

6. Tunsberg, a Norwegian town to the south of Oslo.

7. These Norwegian events are recorded in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla.* See Lee M. Hollander's translation (Texas, 1964), pp. 793–96.

8. According to *Heimskringla,* Óláf ógæfa was a nephew of Eystein, son of King Magnús Barelegs.

9. Various known dates support the saga here: Hvamm was burned in 1160, Archbishop Eystein was consecrated in 1161, Björn was Bishop of Hólar 1147–1162, and Klæng was Bishop of Skálaholt 1152–1175.

10. A Benedictine monastery was established at Þverá in Eyjafjörð in 1155.

11. See *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 25, note 4.

12. A sacred relic in Niðarós Cathedral.

13. Guðmund was illegitimate and therefore had no share of his father's goods.

14. See *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 16.

15. This farm is in Eyjafjörð and is distinguished from a farm of the same name in Hörgárdal. It is possible that the author (or a scribe) has confused the two farms here and that "Upper" is a mistake for "Lower."

16. St. Sunnifa had sailed from Ireland in the tenth century with some companions and founded a cell on the island of Selja off the west coast of Norway. Their relics were discovered in the days of King Óláf Tryggvason and her bones were moved to Bergen Cathedral in 1170.

17. Styrkár was Lawspeaker 1171–1180.

18. King Eystein meyla was killed in battle against King Magnús Erlingsson in 1177. Nikulás, a Norwegian leader, had been killed the previous year by Eystein's closest followers.

19. Mary's Feast was on September 8. The saga writer is thinking of later events (in 1208) involving Kolbein Tumason, nephew of Arnór Kolbeinsson. (See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 21.)

20. 1179.

21. The tent was an awning which was placed over the individual quarters of the crew when protection was needed against bad weather.

22. The cargo was secured (and covered) amidships. The ship's boat was usually fastened here, too, close to the mast.

23. St. Martin's Day was November 11.

24. Gizur Hallsson was Lawspeaker 1181–1200.

25. May 12, 1182.

26. The *Sturlunga* Mss. have 'Jón frænda sinn'; the reading in our text, which is probably more accurate, is from *Resensbók.*

27. Another name for *Sturlu saga.*

28. A mistake for Kálfsson.

29. The 'cowl-men' were the followers of the monk Jón Kuflungr (presumed son of King Ingi Haraldsson), who rebelled against the Norwegian King Sverri until Jón was defeated and killed in 1188.

30. St. Gregory's Feast was on March 12.

31. Bishop Jón gained his nickname because he had enjoyed the protection of King Sverri.

32. Under the year 1189 the Icelandic *Konungsannáll* records the death of Henry II and, among other details, a fairly full account of Ásmund kastanrassi's return from Greenland. Under 1190 the same Annals record Ásmund's shipwreck on the journey to Norway from Iceland.

33. Jarl Eirík Sigurðarson, half-brother of King Sverri.

34. See *Saga of Guðmund dýri,* chap. 14.

35. Pál, son of Jón Loftsson, was Bishop of Skálaholt 1195–1211.

36. Árni Þorláksson was Bishop of Skálaholt 1269–1298; Árni Helgason was Bishop of Skálaholt 1304–1320.

37. A reference to Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) who, when an Abbot in Rome, had wished to set out on a mission to Britain and convert the Anglo-Saxons, but was prevented by the intercession of the Romans.

38. See *Saga of Guðmund dýri,* chap. 18.

39. St. Matthew's Feast was September 21.

40. This payment (*mundr*) was made by a man to his wife-to-be when they were betrothed and was a clear sign that their marriage was a legal one. The gift was a dowry which belonged solely to the wife after marriage.

41. The author is thinking of a later time when the monk Gunnlaug became the leader of the clergy against (Bishop) Guðmund. (See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 25.)

42. St. Nicholas's Feast was on December 6.

43. "Nun" here means an anchoress. There are a few references to anchoresses before two nunneries were established in Iceland, first in 1186 and later in 1295.

44. For the disputes between Sigurð and Sæmund see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 11.

45. St. Óláf was King of Norway 1015–1030; St. Ambrose was Bishop of Milan in the late fourth century.

46. Feast of St. Egidíus was on September 1.

47. St. Bartholomew's Feast was on August 24; the Eve of Holy Cross Day was on September 13.

48. Michaelmas was on September 29.

49. The Christ Church was the Cathedral in Niðarós.

50. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 115.

51. Elsewhere Guðmund's nephews are called Helgi, Eirík, and Óttar, but there is no record of their father's name.

52. St. Hilary's Feast was on January 13.

53. Hall Gizurarson, a priest, was Lawspeaker 1201–1209, and successively Abbot of Helgafel and Þykkvabær where he died in 1230.

54. July 15, 1202. (*Divisio Apostulorum*) was on a Monday.

55. This fjord was Eyjafjörð.

56. These islands have not been identified.

57. The "mark" here is used as a measure of weight, equal to 216 grammes.

58. Hákon Sverrisson, King of Norway 1202–1204.

The Saga of Guðmund dyri

1. See *Genealogical Tables,* note 8.

2. In the mss., the two predicates are reversed, that is, "she had the greater possessions but he came from the better family."

3. For *dowry* (*mundr*), see *Saga of Guðmund Arason the Priest,* note 40; *heimanfylgja* was the dowry which a bride brought with her from her own home. If she was divorced, a wife could claim this dowry from her husband's possessions and take it with her.

4. This was the Spring Þing for the three goðorðs in Eyjafjörð.

5. The court of execution (*féránsdómr*) had to be set up, with all the litigants present, before noon.

6. Blubber was stored in these whale-pits.

7. March 9, 1188.

8. *Föstumátr:* a mixture of fish and milk product which was eaten on fast days when meat was prohibited.

9. It was a condition for the legalizing of a marriage that the groom should enter the bride's bed before witnesses.

10. The Spring Þing was in two parts: the *Sóknarþing* (lasting four days) when all local disputes were tried and, then, the *Skuldaþing* when all debts and levies were settled. Apparently Guðmund did not hold the *Sóknarþing* and transferred all local disputes to the Alþing which was held in August.

11. This suggests that Erlend was a priest.

12. Probably Guðmund Arason awaited the outcome of the Alþing before deeiding whether Ingimund should be buried in consecrated ground.

13. This custom of trial by ordeal (i.e. carrying a hot iron) in order to establish innocence or guilt was introduced into Scandinavia, along with Christianity, from Germany and England. It replaced the

heathen custom of *holmganga* (duel). There are but few references to it in Icelandic literature; the custom was abolished in Norway in 1247. (See *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 4.)

14. The *panzari* was a thick, lined jerkin of German origin, worn either inside or over the chain-mail byrnie.

15. The *leiðarþing* was a local meeting which was held shortly after midsummer, fourteen days after the dissolution of the Alþing. At this Leet (the third and final public assembly—Spring Þing, Alþing, and Leet), new laws and licenses were promulgated and other public announcements made.

16. The so-called Viking Age was long past by this time so that the expression used by our author probably means that Sighvat had been a soldier abroad.

17. The weapon (*refði*) must have been a staff with a short blade, like an axe, and a spike at the end of the shaft.

18. The high lands between the northern and southern inhabited parts of the district.

19. Upper Langahlíð in this saga is the farm called Langahlíð nowadays. The original Langahlíð, in which Önund was burned. was destroyed by a landslide in 1390 and gets its present name (Skriða) from that event.

20. These Rogation days, when religious processions were made around the boundaries of a farm or district, fell on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. (In 1197 the "Tuesday before" was May 6).

21. Valla-Brand Eyjólfsson. (His mother was Arnþrúð.)

22. These beams (*staf-lægja*) rested on the pillars of the house and held them together.

23. In other words, the payment of the fines should decrease by 500 every third year.

24. Probably russet-colored warmal (woolen material woven on hand looms). Before the introduction of gold and silver coin, the *vað-mál* was the standard measure for all payments and trade.

25. This suggests that Hákon had been excommunicated for his part in the burning of Önund.

26. Hákon wishes to be run through the body (like a soldier in battle) and not beheaded (like a criminal).

27. These were the legal followers of Önund in that district.

28. "Place" (O.I. *Set*). The *set* was one of the aisles along the sides of the hall and was divided from the center part of the hall by pillars (running the hall's length) and a partition. In the day the *set* could be used as a sitting room; by night the beds were laid out there. Probably in a large establishment each man would keep his belongings in an allotted area of the *set*.

29. These were the Ember-days following the Feast of the Holy Cross September 14).

30. A porch was built out in front of the main entrance to the house.

31. The crossbow came into use in Iceland during the twelfth century. The "trigger" (?), called *malla* here, and referred to as *mella* elsewhere, was an essential part of the mechanism.

32. Guðmund dýri died in 1212.

The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson

1. The full text of *Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar* is in Guðbrand Vigfusson, *Sturlunga saga* (Oxford, 1878), II, 275–311. It is available in English, translated by Anne Tjomsland, *Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, Islandica,* vol. XXXV (Ithaca, New York, 1951). For comment on texts, possibilities of authorship, and relationship to *Íslendinga saga,* see Tjomsland, *op. cit.,* Introduction; B. M. Ólsen, *Safn til Sögu Íslands,* III, 244–53; and Halldór Hermannsson, *Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði, Islandica,* XXXI (Ithaca, New York, 1945). The compiler of *Sturlunga,* following Sturla Þórðarson's method and purpose, did not repeat events in Hrafn's life which were available in other collections of sagas. Therefore, both in the original and in this translation, this saga begins at Chapter 12. (See R. G. Thomas, Introduction to vol. I, p. 20 ff.)

2. sun-stone: see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 30, note 2.

3. a weight was about 80 lbs.

4. We know from the preceding chapters of *Hrafns saga* that Loft was an illegitimate son of Markús Gíslason, whose two legitimate sons were Gísli and Magnús.

5. Leet-Þing: see *Saga of Guðmund dýri,* note 15.

6. The slaying of Markús is related in *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chaps. 5–7.

7. outlawry: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 2.

8. self-judgment: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 25, note 4.

9. *Andréas-drápa*: formal eulogy about St. Andrew. (See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 38, note 3.)

10. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* especially chaps. 65–67 in which their vengeance on Þorvald is narrated, and chaps. 75–76 where their outlawry is described, and chaps. 81 ff.

The Saga of Þórd kakali

1. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 157.

2. *Oath of Twelve*: in Icelandic law twelve compurgators assisted a man in his suit (cf. C1-V., *eiðr*).

3. the morning-meal was about 9 o'clock.

4. Monday, September 6, 1242.

5. her husband and four sons had been slain at Örlygsstaðir (see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 138).

6. *skuldadómr*: court to determine the liquidation of a man's debts after his death.

7. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 105.

8. *Gestir*: a group of the Norwegian king's guardsmen of lower rank than the *hirðmenn* but having their own leader, banner, place in a royal hall, and assembly. Here, a humorous way to underline Ásbjörn's self-confidence.

9. i.e., Snorri Sturluson and his son Órækja.

10. goðorð: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 2, note 3.

11. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 151.

12. Lawspeaker: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 2, note 1.

13. See *Tale of the Men of Haukadal,* note 10.

14. November 29, 1242.

15. *Pleiades*: about 5 p.m., Friday, November 28, 1242; it would be quite dark at that hour on that date and this cluster of stars clearly visible. Þórð would have been thirty hours on his journey although it was only two hundred kilometers in distance. (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 297.)

16. one of Kolbein's followers.

17. Throughout this translation, *Sand* is the Anglicized form of *Sandr,* either the homestead in Óláfsfjörð or the abbreviated form of Rauðasand, an area in Barðaströnd; the name *Sandar* has been retained without change in this English translation and is a homestead in Dýrafjörð.

18. *Gangdagr,* Rogation Days: see *Saga of Guðmund dýri,* note 20.

19. Moving Days or Removing Days: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 32, note 4.

20. *flautir:* whipped milk, like Danish *fløde,* not as sour as yogurt but more substantially a food than American "whipped cream,"

21. This is not, however, mentioned anywhere else in *Sturlunga saga.*

22. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 153.

23. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chaps. 109 and 115.

24. *Biskupsbrunnr:* the spring which was consecrated by Bishop Guðmund.

25. hundred: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 7, note 1.

26. *Atlöguflokkr, flokkr,* poem (see *Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði,* note 24, plus *atlaga,* sea battle.

27. strophe 2: Mistar was one of the Valkyries.

28. strophe 6: Gunnar was one of the main characters of *Volsunga saga.*

29. *Winter Nights:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 9, note 2.

30. *wadmal:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 3.

31. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 142.

32. Kolbein was thirty-seven years old when he died and his father Arnór was thirty-nine (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 299).

33. Probably each bóndi had paid Kolbein annually a "tax" in sheep, although it is not certain which bóndis were involved or to what extent. (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 299.)

34. August 10, 1245.

35. August 13, 1245.

36. A comet in this year (1246) is otherwise unattested in Icelandic sources.

37. Klypp is referring to their flight after the battle at Örlygsstaðir (see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chapters 138–139).

38. *skáld:* see Prologue, note 1.

39. *drápa:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 38, note 3.

40. *self-judgment (sjálf-dœmi):* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 25, note 4.

41. *Róða-Grund:* Rood-Plain.

42. Þuríð was an illegitimate daughter of Sturla Sighvatsson and had the same name as her half-sister, who was married to Hrafn Oddsson.

43. *duodecimal:* the Icelandic term *tigr* may be translated as a *decade;* but the term *tólfrætt (consisting of twelve tens)* has to be translated as an adjective in English. The careful arithmetic of this passage gives the following dates: St. Óláf died in 1030; the burning at Hítardal was in 1148; Brand fell in 1246.

44. *naust:* a ship's shed, larger than any house or royal hall and so used for very large gatherings.

The Saga of the Men of Svínafel

1. Bishop Heinrek went to Norway in 1249; Þórð kakali went, with Bishop Sigvarð in 1250.

2. Sturla was the Lawspeaker in 1251, but after Iceland became subject to Norway he was Lawman.

3. *goðorð:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 2, note 3.

4. In the saga about Bishop Árni she is named Þuríð and also recorded as Agata, Abbess of Kirkjubær.

5. *outlawry:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 2.

6. *hundred:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 3.

7. A single farmstead was composed of many separate buildings,

each with its own function (kitchen, bath, etc.), each very low and often set down into the earth below what we might consider ground level. One could therefore easily walk up on top of any of the buildings or "houses."

8. *Þingmen:* see *Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði,* chap. 1, note 2.

9. *Quarter:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 53, note 2.

10. Court of Execution (*féránsdómr*): see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 9, note 5.

11. This may mean either *Kirkjubær* or Abbot Brand's *church* at Þykkvabær. (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 301.)

12. *painted saddles:* their saddles were often made of wood and then painted.

13. A farmstead near Kirkjubær, not the monastic center.

14. Skeggi, the father of Þorstein and Klæng, was married to an aunt of Orm's sons.

15. that is, in Norway.

16. *skull:* a nickname for which there is no known meaning. In *Sturlunga saga,* II, 301, the variant reading, *skryllir,* from the British Museum manuscript, is given; this too defies translation.

The Saga of Þorgils skarði

1. *tafl:* a game: see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 117, note 1.

2. *bóndi:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 3, note 1.

3. *vítishorn:* those who in any way broke the strict rules followed in a drinking-feast had to pay the penalty of draining the large *vítishorn,* or "horn of punishment."

4. retainers, or *hirðmenn:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 55, note 2.

5. Guests (*Gestir*): see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 193, note 2, and *Saga of Þórð kakali,* chap. 6, note 8.

6. self-judgment: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 25, note 4.

7. a tax collected on basis of wealth in sheep.

8. Winter Nights: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 9, note 2.

9. Þórð Hítnesing.

10. *sáld:* see *Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði,* chap. 10, note 17.

11. *steward:* overseer or manager when the bóndi was away.

12. *The Dales:* the term generally used to indicate the area north from, but including, Skógarströnd to the West Fjords.

13. from the abbot to Þorgils.

14. i.e., on November 25, after the Feast of the Virgin Mary, November 21, the Feast of St. Cecilía, November 22, the Feast of St. Clement, November 23.

15. here there is a major lacuna in the manuscript.

16. *lögunautr:* messmate, companion. Þorgils' sojourn with Gizur when young must have been the period of their earlier companionship.

17. *wadmal:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 3.

18. these did not always have to be built into the gable-corner, but were movable, with high gable-like head and foot.

19. hammocks (*húðfat*): literally, a hide-vat.

20. traitors to King Hákon.

21. i.e., in order to compel the bóndis to swear allegiance to him one by one.

22. Geisla Day: see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 70, note 1.

23. There is no such place as Heggsstaðir; perhaps an error for Hofsstaðir (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 304).

24. *cow-gilds:* see *Saga of Þorgils and Hafliði,* note 42.

25. *goðorð:* see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 2, note 3.

26. Winter Nights: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 9, note 2.

27. overseer, steward (*umboðsmaðr*): Guðmund had the abbot's responsibilities and his authority when the abbot was absent. Often this term is used to indicate that someone else can act for the abbot, bishop, or bóndi. (See chapter 57 this saga and *Sturlunga saga,* II, 308, note 10 to chap. 57, for other instances of this flexible term.)

28. It was the duty of the *goði* in whose *goðorð* a meeting was held to sanctify the Spring Þing and the Leet-Þing.

29. The *brink* or high place where proclamations and laws were presented to the Þing.

30. It is not clear which of the inhabitants here pretended to be Egil.

31. It is not clear in the paper manuscripts here whether Hrafn was to pay ten or twenty hundreds for Nikulás or for himself ten or twenty hundreds, though the rest of his fine is clear.

32. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 181.

33. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 184.

34. The winter in which Odd Þórarinsson was slain, 1255: see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 188.

35. July 11, 1255, St. John's Day.

36. The meeting Þorgils had summoned: see chap. 40.

37. The church of Reykjaholt was consecrated to St. Peter.

38. Between "Eyjólf" and "Magnús" there is a lacuna in the manuscripts.

39. So that they would recognize their own men in the battle: see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 188—*dreglaður stálhúfur* or steel hats laced with ribbons.

40. Óláf Þórðarson was identical with Óláf hvítaskáld, Sturla's brother, who conducted a school at Stafaholt.

41. He had been on the Fagranes expedition with Odd Þórarinsson (see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 183).

42. This was July 19-20, therefore it was not dark during the battle.

43. After a battle the staff or standard was set up and men brought to this all the booty which was then shared according to fixed rules.

44. a weight was about 80 lbs.

45. Kolbein ungi died in 1245 (see *Saga of Þórð kakali,* chap. 36.)

46. See *Hákonar saga gamla, ed. cit.,* chap. 243.

47. full outlawry: see *Saga of Hvamm-Sturla,* chap. 5, note 2.

48. Þuríð, Hrafn's wife, was Sturla Sighvatsson's daughter and thus, like Þorgils, a Sturlung.

49. The fortifications which Sturla Sighvatsson had had built in the Dales (see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 56).

50. Varðgjá is on the border between Eyjafjörð and the district of Þingeyr.

51. Guðmund bóndi at Hrafnagil, probably a kinsman of Þorgils' mistress Guðrún Gunnar's daughter.

52. In the manuscripts an empty space was left here for this name.

53. January 22, 1258.

54. Lacuna in the manuscript.

55. This somewhat contradicts *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 194.

56. 1 million 800 thousand!

57. *aurar:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 62, note 1.

58. Sturla Hrafnsson.

59. In 1263 King Hákon went harrying throughout Scotland, intending to conquer South Island in the Hebrides, then subject to Norway; but he died at Kirkwall, in Orkney, December 15, 1263.

About Sturla Þórðarson

1. See *Saga of Þorgils skarði,* chap. 80.

2. Þorleif hreim Ketilsson was Lawspeaker 1263–1266, in 1268, and finally, the last Lawspeaker of Iceland, in 1271.

3. See *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 188.

4. The chronology is confused here, for Hallvarð's return is attested for 1261 and Sturla's departure for 1263. Nothing in *Sturlunga saga* clarifies this (see *Sturlunga saga,* I, 310, note 9 to chap. 1).

5. strophe 1: See strophe 94, *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 197; with one minor exception, the last four lines are the same in the original verses.

6. probably a saga about a legendary figure, but the saga is not extant.

7. *Vín* (wine) and *vinr* (friend) are the central words in this punning toast: *Vín skal til vinar drekka.*

8. *bréf:* see R. G. Thomas, Introduction.

9. *hirðmaðr* and *skutilsveinn:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 55, note 2, and chap. 38, note 1.

10. *flokkr:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 38, note 3.

11. *drápa:* see *Saga of the Icelanders,* chap. 38, note 3.

12. Birgir Jarl died in 1266, so that according to the account here Sturla received leave to return to Iceland before his second visit to Norway, i.e., before 1266. From the confusion of dates here the probabilities are that Sturla returned to Iceland in 1265 or 1266 and thereafter returned for his second Norwegian sojourn in 1271. (See Guðni Jónsson, *Annálar* [Reykjavík, 1952], 1263, 1271–1273; pp. 49, 54–56; and *Sturlunga saga,* II, 311, note 15 to chap. 2.)

13. Lawbook (*Járnsiða*): the first Lawbook which a foreign king ordained for the Icelanders.

14. See Cl.-V., *staðamál.*

15. Sturla was Lawman for all of Iceland from 1272 to 1276 and for the West and North Quarters from 1277 to 1282. (See Jónsson, *Annálar,* 1272–1276, pp. 55–58, and 1277–1282, pp. 58–59.) But it is clear that Sturla had little to do with the quarrels of clergy and laity about administration and privileges of the see. (See *Sturlunga saga,* II, 311, note 4 to chap. 3.)

16. July 30, 1284; Sturla was born July 29, 1214.